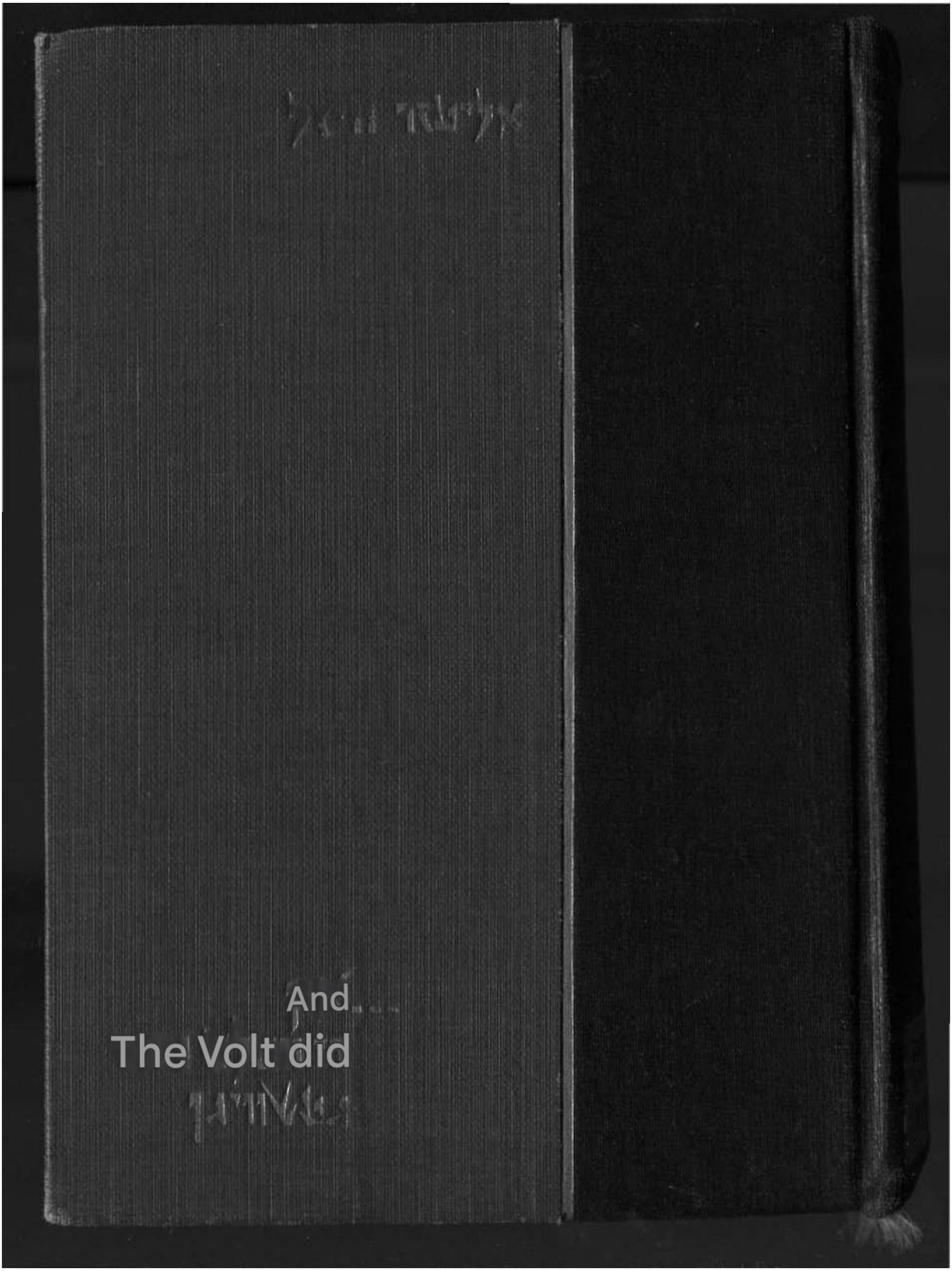
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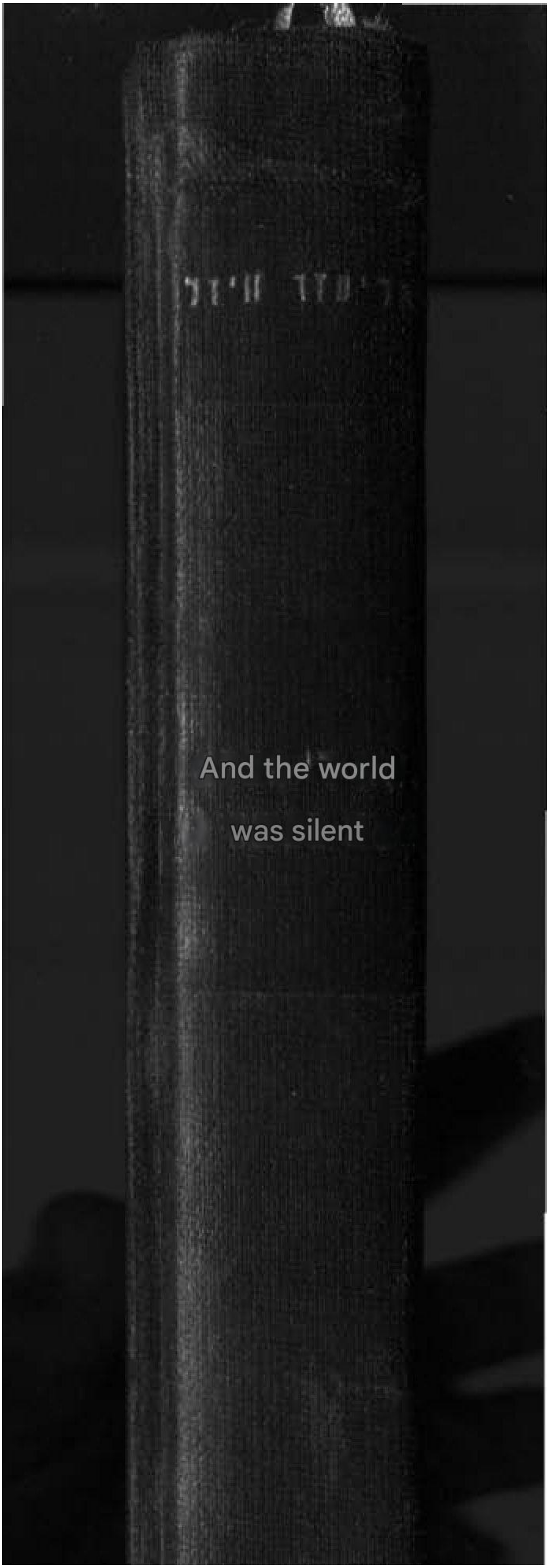

And the world was silent

Eliezer Wiesel

...and the world was silent

Hm

Eliezer Oyzel

... and the world was silent

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This Polish Jewry

117

Editor:
Mark Turkov
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This book is dedicated to the eternal memory
of my mother Sarah, my father Shlomo
and my little sister Zifura - who
were killed by the German killers.

Printing Brothers Zlotopiura Gascon 1231 Buenos Aires.

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Chapter One

The expulsion

In the beginning was the faith, the foolish faith; And the confidence, the firm confidence; And the illusion, the dangerous illusion. We believed in God, had confidence in man and lived with the illusion that in each one of us, there is a holy spark of fire from the Shekinah, that each one of us carries in himself, in his eyes and in his soul, the image of God. This was the source, if not the cause, of all our misfortunes.

⁂

I remember:

In 1942, the Hungarian government issued a law that all Jews who could not prove their Hungarian citizenship would be deported from the country.

We lived in Siget - the most important city and the largest Jewish settlement of the Marmaray province. Until the Second World War, Sighet belonged to Austria-Hungary. Then she was assigned to the Romanian kingdom. In 1940, she was completely returned to Hungary.

The evil decree brought an uproar and fear into the hearts of many Jewish families. How can one demonstrate citizenship? First of all, you have to bring birth certificates, that you were born and precisely in Hungary. But who once considered it necessary to register his son in official registers after circumcision?

The time, which was given to the Jews, in order to obtain the necessary documents, was very limited. So that many Jews, especially from the surrounding villages, could not bring anything to the Day of Judgment.

They were condemned to exile.

— I was still a boy then - barely became a Bar Mitzvah, but the images of the expulsion are forever etched in my memory.

Hundreds of Jews were brought to us in the city. Wow, you had no fun with yourself. Weary, cared for. The congregation organized action to help the unfortunate. Jews gave money, women collected clothes, young boys and girls brought water and bread to the train station.

The condemned were locked in a long, black-lined train, which led them forever and left behind a thick, dirty smoke.

The train left, disappeared and we didn't see the old Jews anymore.

Different rumors circulated in the city: that they are somewhere in Galicia (our town is not far from the Galician border), that they work there and are happy. No one tried to check the accuracy of the rumors. Everyone believed in their authenticity. It was easier that way. Why cast the shadow of doubt on soothing hypocritical news?

None of us and most of all me, still a child, a child who — clings to the beauty of life and the sun, has not tried to ask himself: maybe the devil is blacker than people paint him? Maybe the Jews were led to the slaughter? None of us, and least of all me, a child without a sense of reality - did not imagine that one day could come, a dreaded day, in which we too would be sent in an unknown direction.

The illusion, the accursed tavlonian illusion has stolen our heart.

And days passed. Days, weeks, months.

People have already forgotten those Jews in the town. A wind of peace and tranquility blew and drove away old worries, former doubts. Merchants traded, yeshiva boys squeezed the bank and settled an issue; The boys in the classroom learned Humsh Rashi: Avionim went over the houses to bring home something on Shabbat.

The old, eternal, normal life of the Jewish city. Suddenly the Jewish street was disturbed: Moshele returned. Returned from there, from there!

⁂

Moshele the sun - that's what they called him, because it didn't occur to anyone that he also had a family name and a last name. He was a tiny, withered Jew, with a yellow goatee and a dinky childish voice; a funny man by nature, the owners of the house loved him and often gave him donations and gifts. He became smaller than ever, thinner than ever and even his beard became yellower than ever.

The deportation decree also happened to him. He was - it seems - a Kossever Hasidic and his parents also came from Galicia. He was not a Hungarian citizen. That's why he was really sent along with the rest of the foreign Jews to Galicia. And with him - his entire family: an eternally ill woman with four or five children.

Now, he came back. A ghost of that world.

What does he have to tell, Meshela? A lot of things. Little Moses, the sun, brought with him many fearful tidings.

He told how the transport was picked up by the Gestapo, immediately after crossing the Ungai Rish Galician border. How all the Jews were led into a forest, how they had to dig a big, huge mass grave. How Gestaponiks learned to shoot themselves, throwing suckling children in the air... The whole shipment died there. And he, Moses? lucky A miracle from heaven. Only wounded in the leg. The killers considered him dead.

For hours, days and nights, Moshele used to go from house to house, from person to person and tell scary stories, paint fancy terre horror pictures, pass on details about this and that, about the beautiful queen, who poured for three hours and about Zalman the tailor, who begged Stephponik to shoot him before he shoots his children.

Moshele told everyone who wanted to listen to his words.

He has changed, Moshele. It was impossible to recognize the former sun in him. The laughter disappeared from his Hasidic eyes, his dinky and childish voice became dark-black.

Instead of stories about rabbis and chief priests, he told nightmares.

But who was willing to listen to them?

Nobody.

Jews said:

- Moshele wants to arouse compassion. And he obviously has an imagination

A rich...

Others replied:

No. He is simply out of his mind, poor Moses... —

And he, the little Moses, the sun, wept with bitter tears, swore by heaven and by the throne of honor that everything he told was true:

- Jews! Believe me! I'm not asking for donations, just believe me! he shouted. —

Nothing helped. They didn't believe him.

Even I myself did not believe him. Often I used to sit with him at the hearth of the beit midrash, after offering and praising. And listening to his stories, thinking about his grief. mercy He aroused sympathy in me, belief - not.

And that hurt him, Mashelen, hurt him terribly. I think I'm crazy! I don't believe it! His lips used to murmur and tears — used to pour from his eyes like drops of milk.

Once I asked him:

Moshela, what is the matter? Why do you want so badly to be — believed? What do you care if your words are taken or not? He closed his eyes:

I don't understand, he answered with a smile - I was saved, escaped from — slaughter. Where did I get this strength from? One thing gave me strength and courage: I wanted to come home... to you... to tell... you should know... you should be able to prepare yourselves... only this, not something else. Life? I didn't want to live anymore. The family lost... left alone...

An orphan from all sides... but I wanted to warn you... and no one listens to my words.

I did listen to everything he told, but - like the whole community - I didn't believe him. The prophets of destruction never want to be believed.

We closed our ears, closed our eyes and silenced the voice of reality.

⁂

This was at the end of 1942.

Then life became normal again. Lonnie's radio Don delivered encouraging news: about Stalingrad, about Al Alamein, about the prospects of a second front, about the thousands of tons of bombs that fall every night on German cities and - Jews were hoping for good times.

At the top of the power stood Horti Miklas, the re-Ghent, and he was not an enemy of Israel. Who cares? I personally threw myself into studies. studied non-stop. During the day, I caught a glimpse of Rambam's Teacher Nabuchim and at night I read Kabbalah books.

My father traded. The grandfather used to come in from Beachy Kev every Rosh Hashana to the Barsher Rabbi and the mother started thinking about a match for the eldest sister, Deborah.

year — So it is completely calm and normal. 1943

⁂

Spring 1944.

Good news from the Eastern Front. There is no longer any doubt about Hitler's victory. The Red Army is getting closer every day. It's only a matter of weeks, who knows, maybe days and.......

A mood full of confidence prevails in the town.

We will experience the day of victory! Somehow everyone is safe in this! Everyone claims that the heart tells him so and the heart does not tell a lie.

Freedom's cannons thunder on the horizon. We hear them... The war will soon end. In any case - for us.

That's what everyone thought and said.

About Auschwitz, about Majdanek, about Treblinka and Buchenwald We didn't know. No one told us about gas chambers and crematoria. As in an isolated, hammered house We lived.

We did not think that Hitler was capable of realizing his murderous plans regarding the Jewish people. We have in 11944!!! - That these are only words, hysterical babblings of a maniac and nothing more.

People said:

The Red Army is marching forward... Hitler will not prove to — do evil, even when he wants to...

Yes, even regarding his will we doubted.

The old problem: a normal person cannot understand a madman. A normal mind is unable to understand a disturbed mind. We could not believe that Hitler would want to exterminate an entire nation, what does it mean: exterminate a nation?! Just like that?! In the twentieth century?!

Such and similar thoughts tried to dispel accidental pessimism. And she succeeded. Optimism faded, too. One with the red flowers on the spring fields.

Jews were busy with everything, interested in everything with strategy, with war, with Zionism, but not with — Everyone their own destiny.

Even Moshela, the small skinny Moshela, was silent.

He stopped telling me about his scary stories. People don't believe him anyway... what's the point of talking him into the world?

But he became sad and broken, the little ummi conscious prophet. He used to walk around in the synagogue, with his eyes downcast, because he didn't want to look at the frivolity of his friends.

They really were frivolous, the poor Jews, in this spring of 1944. An example: it was then possible to buy grain for money - and immigrate to the Land of Israel. I asked my father for certificates: should he sell everything, liquidate everything and pass!

His answer:

- I am too old my son. Too old. Too much power invested in the current business. Hard to start a new life in a new country, build a new home in a far country...

The same answer was given by many of their parents Children.

Because they were blind, the old Jews. They closed their eyes so as not to see the black sun in the sky, so as not to see the future. the future? - Sigeter Jews thought, the future will not bring any extraterrestrials.

Not long ago they thought so...

Soon the radio announced this kind of news: the fascist party had seized power in Budapest. Horti Miklas was forced to appoint a fascist as prime minister...

People have already become a little restless. This does not smell like good news. The Hungarian fascists did not speak out once

Their opinion about the Jewish problem. They are not followers of the nations of the world. Well, we'll wait and see."

The next morning, the radio announced that in agreement with the new government, the German army marched into Budapest.

Our Jews were already frightened. Redemption is really close, but the danger has grown and become more serious because of it. A friend of mine, Moshe Haim Berkavitch, is coming back from Budapest and does not bring good news:

Budapest Jews live in fear. Anti-Semitic incidents in the Jewish — street. Gentiles tear Jewish beards, beat Jewish passengers if they are packed in the train. Not good, not good...

But - the false god of exaggerated confidence still did not give up on his victims. Jews consoled themselves:

- The Germans will probably remain in the main city, because Strategic, political reasons. They won't get there. ...Not even three days passed and German motorcycles and cars appeared in the streets of Sighet.

⁂

Trembling.

The German soldiers and their steel helmets and dead heads brought shivers with them. We really didn't know anything about — Auschwitz and Treblinka, but we did know one thing: our uninvited and unexpected foreign guests are not good friends. We should not expect much good from them.

The first impression was not bad at all. On the contrary: the Germans prepared a pleasant surprise for us. The officers were quartered in private houses and their relationship to the owners of the houses was correct, if not polite.

They didn't come with exaggerated demands, didn't make any anti-Semitic comments and from time to time they even tried to give an ambiguous smile.

It was just Passover time. Jews prepared for the great holiday, as usual. At the rabbis' house, matzah semirah was baked. In ordinary Jewish houses, people cleaned and washed, polished dishes, kept hamtzid dishes, cooked, baked. Yes, as usual. The Passover would be the same as all the Passovers. Immediately the black crow would not crackle over our heads.

The eternal optimists boasted:

- Well? What did the monks tell you? You never wanted to believe. Now, do you have your German... well? What do you say to them? Where is their wickedness? Where is their cruelty? You didn't want to believe...

Opposite us, with the Kahana family, lived a German officer. It was said of him that he is a sympathetic guy. A left-handed person, a polite person. Three days after he moved into his new apartment, he brought Mrs. Kahana a gift: chocolate. This gave more courage to our optimists and more weight to their words. Now they would even have seen a favor from the Lord of the worlds

In the arrival of the German army.

The eternal optimists... not a few of them are guilty of this tragedy, or more correctly: in the way that we accepted the coming disaster with love.

Clearly: they did their harmful work unintentionally. They did not have any bad intentions. Quite simply: they wanted to calm down, make the future easier, if it is impossible to change the future.

And unfortunately, they mostly succeeded. They calmed down the crowd. Others - but not their own. Their words of confidence drove away the sufficiency of that one, but not of themselves.

That's why when they used to talk to you, they used to never look directly in your eyes. They were ashamed: maybe you will find the truth, maybe you will see their own fear there... It is easier to tell a lie with the mouth than with the eyes. They kept their eyes lowered, and only the mouth was open, only The mouth spoke words of hope. And remarkable: the ears were also open. People listened and believed.

The Germans were already in the city, the Fascists were in power, the verdict was already hanging in the dark air and many Jews still believed, had confidence and felt a sense of hope.

delusions.

⁂

Passover.

A gorgeous weather outside. The mother is busy in the kitchen. Jews go to school. True, you don't go to open schools anymore. Of course, people are afraid of something.... Don't open here to the devil! The big school is closed. Dark windows. The Torah holders" - also. The Talmud Torah - also. The Tofarat Bukhurim", which I founded together with my colleagues, Chaim Kahana, Yerachmiel Mermelstein and the Becher brothers - we closed right on the day when the first Germans entered the city. My father explained to me: the Germans should not know that there is a place where young men come together... Meninin in private houses. At Barsher Rabin, at Slatfener Rabin, at the sixth rabbi. Of course, this order is prophesied. I ask four questions. Zfurhle, my little sister is thinking about stealing the afikuman. As said: everything as usual. But you feel something in the air. The heart is heavy, loaded with stones, with trembling. A Yom Tov without joy is no Yom Tov. And there was no joy in that Passover.

Monday of Passover. Passover holiday. Two more days and the holiday is here
through. through in peace. I wish!
No. The holiday did not pass peacefully.
The curtain rose on the seventh day of Passover. The first act of
the tragedy. On this day, we learned that some Jewish businessmen were arrested, that
Germans were tearing Jewish beards and looting Jewish property.

From now on, everything developed with lightning speed. The
Germans, it seems, did not have enough time to provide the Yisui Rim, which
they prepared for us in portions. You have to make it fast! The first
decree: Jews must not appear in Gos for three days
Days. For three seasons. Whoever will be caught - woe to him! Moshele,
the little Shemsel, entered the house and his
Face reflected a dead soul:
you see - He said - I warned you! —
Then he went to his house and slammed the doors.
- I don't want to, I can't see any German in front of my eyes!
He used it for some homeowners. —
Have Jews locked themselves in their homes and still did not want
to see the reality! The confidence is with them, with us, still has not fallen!

Then Hungarian police officers broke into all the Jewish homes of
the city. A Jew - they said - must not have with him, no gold, no silver jewelry, no
money.
Nothing! And everything they found was taken. Mila. Morality has not
yet fallen on our Jews. My
Father went down to the basement and buried all our possessions. They
should now come to search! Did they really come... and search... and get angry, not
finding more than a few coins that were prepared for public viewing. We were lucky: in our
house they only shouted, threatened; At neighbors they beat, tortured.

Do pious Jews, Torah Jews, have a business code: they give permission
to corrupt... If the corrupter is given permission to do bad things, who
will be able to stop him?
The optimists were silenced. They were not seen again. They
could not be seen. It was obviously forbidden to go out in the
street!...
At home we asked ourselves: what will happen now? The mother
felt: this is only the beginning, the first chapter. What will
the sequel look like?
Yes, that was just the beginning. But a skilled eye could
see in it the development of the action, the next chapters,
the further intentions of the author.
But our eyes were not satisfied.
We lived in permanent expectation. What will be
Let it be. What must come should come. Let the leaves mix —
From our own book.
And they got mixed up. Quickly, impatiently mixed. No
Didn't have time.
Three days after the three-day arrest - a recent decree.
This time a classic: the yellow patch. Every Jew must sew a yellow Star
of David on his outer garment.
Jews obeyed. Embroidered yellow Star of David on outer
garments. We still didn't know that it wasn't that either
worst.
Some businessmen came to my father - who had
good relations in high Hungarian circles and therefore was a kind
of eternal adviser - to consult with him, listen to his
Opinion about situation.
did not want the morning in — My father did not see pictures or
dark colors. — saw and

- A yellow patch? - He said Mila, you don't die from this...

Oh father! Oh, people die from this! Why did you die later, if not because of all that the yellow patch dragged me along?

If you had seen it then, you would have been told then, at the very beginning - in April 1944!!! - How many dangers are there in the oh, small, insignificant decree, would you die later? Unanswered questions. As sages say: tie. Let's not stop at them. The heart bleeds too much. Better go back to chronological events. well Jews were not overly alarmed by the yellow Star of David. We carried him shamelessly. I personally had a strange feeling that an award, a historical medal, was hanging on my clothes. I used to glance at former non-Jewish acquaintances and feel contempt for them: they don't have what I have! And strange: in the beginning it appeared to me that they were ashamed himself.

But for a long time we could not think about the meaning of the Star of David, new decrees have already been issued: Jews are forbidden to enter cafes, restaurants, forbidden to ride the train, forbidden to appear in the street after 6 o'clock in the evening and the worst decree: The ghetto!

⁂

Two ghettos were formed in Sziget: one big one, in the middle of the city, which covered four streets, and one smaller one, at the end of the city, on the upper Yarash", which consisted of a couple of small houses.

Our street - "The Snake Street" - fortunately fell into the area of the ghetto, so that we didn't have to worry about looking for an apartment and moving there with luggage and furniture. We stayed in our own apartment. But as our house was a corner building and on one side the windows looked out towards Kamer street (outside the ghetto), we had to hack them.

A couple of rooms were given to me by relatives who had been evicted from their apartments. Life began to gradually normalize. The ghetto did not threaten us. Somehow we were not afraid of the barbed wire, which, like a wall, surrounded the ghetto.

On the contrary: we felt good. Only among our own... here is a small Jewish country... A Jewish council, a Jewish police, an office for social assistance, a labor office, a sanitary department, etc., a Jewish government agency were formed! Excellent! - was our reaction to all this. Now people will no longer have before their eyes the murderers' faces, the hateful glances! Out of fear! Out of fear! We live only among Jews, among brothers...

Clearly: there were also unpleasant moments in the ghetto. For example, every day the Germans demanded groups of Jews who had to load coal on military trains. And few volunteers were found among us for such worship. But other than that, the mood, in general, was good, if not at all calming.

The general belief was: I will stay here. In the ghetto, until the end, until the end of the war, until the arrival of the

Red Army. And then - then everything will return to the old. The
parenthesis will close.
And the Germans did everything to strengthen the A, believe in
our hearts.
Therefore, no tragic scenes took place, not when the Jews moved into the ghetto and not
during their life in the ghetto.

— Everything played out calmly, in order and even a
laugh. with
Jews knew: the story is not as tragic as it seems.
After all, you stay in the city, not far from home... and
The day is not far, when it will be a new month as before.
Neither the German nor the Jew ruled in the ghetto. The illusion reigned.

⁂

And so days passed, days that tore pages from the calendar and brought us closer to that black Sabbath. Which will forever remain in my memory, even when I will be condemned to live until the last day of all days, in this hypocritical world.

It happened on the Sabbath before Shavuot.
A spring sun poured its light and warmth over the entire world
and also over the ghetto.
Ghetto residents walked in the crowded with people The
streets. Carefree faces. They talked about everything related
to war and peace. Children were playing with snow on the sidewalk. I
and several colleagues sat in the garden of Ezra Malik and studied
Midrash Raba.
Later, night fell and neighbors gathered in our yard. At a twenty person.
The very cream of all

Jewish settlement. We stood around my father and listened to his anecdotes, parables
and political theories about the situation. He was a good storyteller, my
father.

After a while, the gate of the yard opened and Stern - once an owner of a small shop in Egypt Street and today a ghetto policeman - entered and approached my father, whispering a secret in his ear.

Despite the darkness, which began to engulf us
I noticed how my father's face turned pale:
what happened what? An accident God forbid? speak a word? —
Ask, ask, ask. Unrest in the
My father replied:
I don't know anything. I was called to an urgent meeting of the Jewish —
Council. Something must have happened.
Something has happened... or: something is going to happen! The clock of fate
let his first sound be heard. The visors turn forward. Something has to
out. — happen. Everyone is sure of this. Something must burst, break
what?
heart.
A silence dominated the court, the sky, the assembled. My father
kept telling an anecdote and never finished it.

A beautiful moonlit night. A far extinct sky. Everything is calm around.. no one says a word. It is immediately feared that with a word one can wake up the fate from sleep.
My father says:
- I am going to the Jewish council immediately. I will see what happens
there. As soon as possible I will be back and tell you everything.
Word to...
There is no choice. We will talk. An hour and even a whole year. Let my
father know the secret, the truth. We were standing in the yard, like

It's like an operating room: there was silence, waiting impatiently — for the door to open, for the sky to open... and in between silence.

In the meantime, more neighbors arrived. An Umet went from house to house. The news that there is an urgent meeting in the Jewish Council spread with extraordinary speed. An extinct sky. In the heart - a sky of lead. Such a heavy burden in him. Somehow it clicks there so fearfully, so strangely happy...

You look at the clock every few minutes. The visors do not move. As in spite of it. Immediately they would get a sudden paralysis attack.

Five minutes. Seven. Ten. The father still did not come. Half an hour. The nerves - pulled like strings. an hour. After all there, the father. Unrest turns into simple fear. what happened What can mean the long, too long meeting? My mother says:

I have a bad feeling. This afternoon, new faces in the ghetto seen. Two senior officers, Germans. Looks like Stephponics. A bad sign. Ever — since you entered the ghetto, there hasn't been a police officer here yet...

No one answers. No one dares to answer. At this point, all questions remain open. Where are our professional optimists? Why don't they also try now, precisely now, to calm the mood?

It's almost twelve o'clock. He doesn't want to, he doesn't feel like going to sleep. Some neighbors ran home to see if everything was in order. Others said goodbye, wished them a good night, a good week and asked them to come and let them know when the father would be back from the Jewish council.

Around half past one the gate finally opened and the

Father came in - no: fell in, a sop in the yard. We surrounded — him, as sick people or their relatives surround a hospital doctor.

told! say! What's up? Say a word... —

I wanted to hear, at this moment, a reassuring word, a word of confidence, to hear from him that there is nothing to be afraid of, that the meeting was a normal one, an ordinary one, that they talked about ongoing issues, about sanitary and social problems, about apartments and taxes...

But it was enough to glance at his pale face, which seemed to flicker in the endless darkness of the night, in order to understand: the inevitable has happened, has arrived.

The father stood in the middle of the living circle and told:

- A terrible news. Transport. An order from the Gestapo... the ghetto must be liquidated. We must all leave the city. Tracy Ford. Some shipments will be organized. Streetwise, streetwise wise...

No one interrupted his words. They wanted to hear everything. until the end. Wanted to drink the bitter wine from the cup to the last drop. The gospel deafened us. We were punched in the face. Suddenly we lost the ability to think, to weave logical thoughts, to ask factual questions. Something made everything around - and myself - seem like a dream.

I don't remember how long the silence lasted. I only think that she was more fearful than the gospel itself, more fearful than the words that provoked her.

Then someone (who? Maybe no one and maybe all together) asked a question:

- Where are they taking us?

But the important question remained unanswered.

a secret A secret for everyone, except for one: the leader of the Jews

Council. He knows yes - that's how people say how we are treated. But he doesn't want to talk. He is not allowed to speak. He is afraid. The stapo warned him: if he reveals the secret, he will be shot.

My father remarked in his broken voice:

There are rumors, rumors according to which we are being led — somewhere in the depths of Hungary, working in a brick factory. The front is too close... that must be the reason...

And after a minute of silence:

...Tomorrow, the following streets will be closed: "Slangen — Street", "Ai Far Street". Everyone may take only personal belongings with them: a backpack, food, a few clothes. Nothing more.

There is a dead silence all around.

In the heart - a storm of fear.

Goes, wakes up the neighbors, the father asks those — gathered to get ready...

The people next to me woke up as if from sleep. They disappeared, like shadows, in all directions, like crazy messengers of fate.

⁂

When we were left alone, among our own, in the yard, something happened that is worth telling.

A relative of ours, Batia Reich, who lived with us, came to run:

- Someone is knocking on the window!

The window was hacked, because it looked out to Kamer Street, which was, as said, outside the ghetto.

It took a few precious minutes until we went and tried to open it and then it was already too late. We did not find anyone near the window.

And only after the war, we found out who was knocking on the window. It turned out to be an inspector from the Hungarian police, a good friend of my father.

Before we entered the ghetto, he told us: Go calmly. Be calm. If a danger threatens you, I will — Come to know do...

He came. He knew about the danger.

If we had talked to him then, the events would have been possible

Another character assumed. We had opportunities and possibilities to hide among ordinary people and prominent personalities. Many non-Jews from the neighboring villages begged us for mercy, so that we should come to them. There are bunkers for uni desert roads in the village or in the mountains. But we rejected all suggestions. Why? Quite simply: the calendar showed April 1944 and we, fellow Jews, still didn't know everything about Treblinka, Buchenwald and Auschwitz...

It was a matter of fate.

⁂

The ghetto suddenly woke up from sleep. Little by little, lights came on in the windows. People started getting ready to go. The first picture of deportation Appears in her wild nakedness.

I remember - as if it happened yesterday:

I entered a friend's house. Wake up the owner of the house. He was an older Jew, a son of the Torah, a Yoda book, a gray beard, dreamy eyes. I told him:

- Stand up Rabbi Yid, stand up my friends. Get ready for the road. Tomorrow you will be expelled. You and your children, you and your family, you and all Jews. Where? don't ask me where

Rabbi Yid Hartziker. Don't ask me any questions. You can only get answers from the Lord of the world. Stand up...

He didn't understand what I was talking to him. Probably meaning that I'm out of my mind, that he's out of his mind, that I'm throwing him into a terrible dream:

- What?! What are you talking about?! Prepare yourself? to what? to when? Have you gone crazy, like noble Feldman?

Yidele Feldman, was my friend, a grandson of the dean, Rabbi Shlomohe Heller. A short time before we entered the ghetto, he, a nobleman, lost his mind.

My half-awake friend fixed his fearful eyes on me, his face was waiting for something from me, waiting for a gesture, a word, a glance, waiting for me to burst out laughing and tell him:

- Go put you back to bed. Sleep, dream, nothing happened, really nothing, just a joke...

But his expectation turned into disappointment. My throat was dry. The words were choked out, even before they arrived from the brain to the lips. I didn't have - I couldn't have - what to say.

Then he suddenly understood. Everything understood. Immediately a curtain would rise and reveal the reality, the thickness of the darkness outside.

got off the bed and began to pull up - with his clothes on mechanically.

Then he went to the bed. Where his wife is sleeping and you — Movements He touch her forehead with incredible tenderness. She opened her pale, tired eyes and it seems that a smile appeared around her lips. In the end, he went to the beggar, where his two children were sleeping, woke them up, with power, with violence, tore them out of their dream worlds.

And there was so much pathos in the way he woke up his wife and children, that I suddenly felt my legs run away, run far away and I followed them without looking behind me.

Such and similar scenes exist in all homes.

A shocking night.

In the whole ghetto - an exile mood. And suddenly it seems that it has never been different, that either the representation of the ghetto or the representation of the whole city, that since the beginning of the 6th century, such a mood dominated the inhabitants of the ghetto. Now the situation has changed. Time passed with super human speed.

There is no sign of movement and it is already 4 o'clock in the morning.

My father is running around, here and there, sobbing, sweating, crying, like a lost child. He comforts his acquaintances, he is trying to convince the Jewish council, perhaps the decree was annulled in the meantime, because - you understand it yourself - until the last moment, the devil of confidence was in our hearts and tried to convince us that everything is an illusion and we will only come out with fear.

The decree was not annulled.

God issued this cruel judgment and did not want to make it void. If people then had time, and patience, to think, to delve into philosophical problems, many would

Heretics were born on that day in Siget. But there was no time to think. The deportation machine was working at full steam and it was drowning out minds.

A commotion, a noise, screams, tears, a sigh, a whimper. The ghetto was turned into a smoky beehive. Everyone was busy, busy.

Women cooked hard eggs, baked meat, prepared cakes. Men sewed rucksacks, children turned around with down-

Loose heads, not knowing where their place is, not knowing where they need to hide, so as not to disturb the adults in their work.

courtyard - a market: valuable things, expensive carpets, silver lighters, a challah tablecloth, a spice box, cycles, arrangements, everything is scattered on the dirty ground, under too blue a sky. Immediately they would never have a landlord, immediately there would be no landlord in the world. Lit Dean and Lit Dayan. Everything is foolishness, fearful foolishness. When the man is out of man, the world is out of the world.

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Eight o'clock in the morning. A fatigue poured like boiling lead into all the veins, into all the limbs, into all the minds. I stopped in the middle of praying. Fluzim: violence in the street. Quickly took off the tefillin and ran out to see what was happening. Hungarian field gendarmes broke into the ghetto and shouted:

- All Jews out of the houses! All out! Out in the street!

Jewish policemen went into Jewish homes and begged, with restrained voices, mercifully begged those sentenced to deportation, to leave their homes:

Go, brothers, go, the hour has struck... Many — Jewish policemen wept during the story. A wonder? Imagine what happens in the heart of such a policeman when he has to drive his brother, his relative from home, from the warm home, drive him away like a thief, naked and barefoot and unhappy...

The Hungarian field gendarmes were wilder than wild animals. They hit with their guns, with their kanchiks, without mercy, for some reason, they hit on the right and on the left, old men and women, children and the sick. God's wrath was poured out on us. Change permission to corrupt...

Houses are becoming more and more empty, more and more dirty and the street - more and more full.

Ten o'clock: all the Jews who were designated for deportation were already standing in the middle of the street. The issue of counting began. Gendarmes went around among the victims and counted them once, twice and twenty-five times. At every count get up —

And the sun flickered in the red bloody sky, immediately it wanted to ignite not only the world, but also or precisely its creator.

A terrible fever. Sweat pours from the faces. Children ask for water. They are thirsty, their throats are dry. Wow Sir... water? There is enough water here. In the yard, at home, but forbidden to leave the queue.

Water! Mother, a little water! - Crying children. —

The new way of life has already begun. Also water has become a problem, a question of life. Jewish policemen have turned into Malachi Sharett; go- Bring water for thirst.

We too - my sisters and I - ran around getting water and distributing mitzvah, distributing water. We were able to move because we were assigned to the last transit port.

We shared lives, shared cups of water.

And not once did a tear, a simple one, a modest one fall into a cup. Inside

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Finally!

One o'clock. We are getting ready to enter the road. This count is over. God bless.

A joy - yes, a joy! Command the crowd. People rejoice because the order to go has already been given. It turned out that there is no greater pleasure in God's hell, than to sit here in the middle of the street, on suitcases, under the burning sun... It is better to go, go where you are called, where you send me. Go and don't look any more from the busy street to the empty houses, to the blooming gardens, to the memory stones... Go! Ut-sh I'm going.

The crowd became a strange procession, which had no comparison in my childhood imagination. A procession of shadows. Each with a bag on their shoulders. Each with a sorrow - who is mute and who is crying in his eyes.

Slowly, even very slowly, the procession marches to the gate of the ghetto.

And I stand like this on the sidewalk of our house (our house...) and look at the picture that unfolds before my eyes. I could hide at home and not see all of this. It would be easier. But a masochistic desire awoke in the blood. It wanted to suffer something. Means with the rule. I stood on the sidewalk in front of our house and looked inside

Absorbed those tears, those looks, that joy. Here goes the rabbi, the Mera Datra, rabbi Rabbi Ikutiel Yehuda Taitli Boim. His tall, noble, slender figure bent. Be black

Hadrat's facial beard disappeared. A backpack on his back. Next to him - the rabbis with the children. It cuts in the heart. The rabbi without a beard, the rabbi with a rucksack... it's hard to believe. Only because of him alone, because of the Rabbi, the whole picture does not become real, as if taken out of a dream or from a historical novel about the Babylonian exile, or the expulsion from Spain.

Not far from him: Rabbi Zeide, the teacher. A weak, broken Jew. His sharp, angry eyes - lost the flame. also be in one, oprazirt. He also bends over, immediately he would try to create power from the earth. Strength to bear his fate, his fate. R. Zeide the teacher - that's what I called him and that's what he did

Everyone knew him. Even my father didn't know his last name. Years ago, I studied Dardki and Torah in writing and oral Torah with him: Baba Metzia, Baba Batra. We loved him and still trembled for him. And he had a helper, Isaac, a young healthy guy, an iron head and a striking rod. We were more afraid of Isaac than of him, Rabbi Zeiden. why? Rabbi Zayde had a certain kindness on his face - despite his angry eyes. Somehow it always seemed that his strict relationship with us was just a game, a comedy, that he himself was laughing at it...

Now he is dragging his sack, his life, along with hundreds of other Jews, who are leaving their homes, immediately leaving their childhood: not knowing what the old age will look like.

Here, go youth friends, colleagues. Go to the room together with them. With some, the Tofarat Boys" was established. With others, a fasting dream was fulfilled. With all - all - too many dreams were woven. Here they go: Moshe Sharp, Yitzchak Younger, Haim Kahana, Dudel Weiss, Eliezer Kahana and so many others, so many others.

They don't look at me, they don't see me. Maybe they are angry that I stay outside the camp, that I go with the closest, with the last truancy

Port, which I still stay at home for a couple of hours, a couple of days. Thousands do lead in their hearts.

The procession disappeared down the street. Five minutes later: she is out of the ghetto.

Now the ghetto is empty. She existed for a month, no more.

Everything came so fast, like a typhoon storm on the sea. The German did not have time, the action had to be carried out quickly. Quick. Otherwise, there was a danger: the Jews would be freed by the Red Army. The front - so close...

The ghetto is empty. Fearfully empty. Numbered families stayed until the nearest transport.

The street: a gypsy market. On every step and step - expensive objects. Leather suitcases, women's bags, knives, plates, spoons. Jews threw away many things even before they began to walk their eternal path. There was no power in them. There was no strength to drag an entire existence, everything that was acquired with blood and sweat, with daily effort and pain for decades, for several generations.

Open houses everywhere. Doors and windows wide open, like another fire, like another disaster. A free world. Anyone who wants can come and have — everything that his desire desires. Everything. But Ved is now thinking about going and taking other people's property? What can be done with him? Tomorrow we will obviously have to leave our own possessions, our own possessions and good things to God's grace.

The ghetto suddenly became an open grave. Everything is so empty, so empty, so empty!

...a month ago, a week ago - what am I talking about? 24 hours ago! People turned around here, people who dreamed about freedom, about justice, people who believed in happiness when a child's smile was reflected in their eyes, people who had confidence in God's ways!

A while back...

— A fearful emptiness - a mental and physical emptiness Around.

In the sky, a summery, smiling sun. Spring is upon God's blessed world.

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Also in our house a waste, a disorder.

The day passed without us taking anything in our mouths. But you don't feel any hunger. Only a tiredness, an infinite. An abnormal fatigue.

My father accompanied the exiles to the ghetto gate. Now he came back with news: all the Jews were led to the great school. There they are examined, whether they are not smuggling gold, money or other expensive jewelry. The tension - a high. The moral - a fallen. There were hysterical outbreaks, mainly among older women or young mothers. There was also brutality on the part of the gendarmes.

When is our turn? I ask my father. —

— Tomorrow sounds his weary repentance - over- If in between something will not happen. Tomorrow. — — — If possible, maybe a miracle!

How stupid, how crazy naive we all were. Still believed in miracles and in what shows miracles. Instead of believing - simply in blind fate.

Where are the exiled Jews taken? Do you already know something? Didn't realize it at all? No. The secret is guarded. The ways of fate too. —

The night fell unnoticed, immediately she would be ashamed to go down to such a world.

That evening we went to bed early. And because of the fatigue, the night was not a sleepless one. The eyes closed of their own accord, immediately they wanted to forget everything they had to see during the whole day.

The father said to us children:

You may sleep peacefully, our turn will not come until the day after tomorrow. —

That means - Tuesday.

Monday disappeared quickly, like a summer candle before a rain, like a dream in the morning hours.

During the whole day, people prepared at home: baked, cooked, sewed backpacks. Something was not thought about the future. The A. Question ceased to interest, to refine minds. The verdict was published. A pity every word, a pity every thought. You have to relate to the misfortune, just like that He treats us with contempt.

And after sundown, when Monday also came to an end, the mother told us to go to bed early. We must gather strength, she said, we must persevere!!!

And this night also merged with the other countless nights of the past.

The last night at home. The last...

We got up quite early. I hastened to put tefillin. Do not be driven away, God forbid, not having waited.

My father got up before us and went into the street looking for news. He came back around eight o'clock in the morning. Good news: we will leave the ghetto soon, but not the city. Not yet. We only pass through the small ghetto. On the upper Yarash. There we will wait for the last transit port. We will be the last Jews of the city. After our departure, Siget will remain pure Jews...

A good news indeed. Won a couple of days. That's good too.

Nine o'clock in the morning: the Sunday scene repeats itself.

evidence — with mustaches, with feathers in their hats in — Gendarmes in the ghetto. They call:

- All Jews out in the street!

We were ready. Really waiting for this order. He hung in the air, over our heads, for two seasons.

I left the house first. Didn't want to, couldn't look at the faces of the parents. Afraid that if I see their faces I won't be able to restrain myself and shoot out with a cry

And I didn't want to cry at that moment, I didn't want to in any way.

In the middle of the street like a gypsy. Standing first. Then one falls a victim to the sun, to the fatigue that spreads throughout the body. Someone sit down. Others take him as an example. Soon we are all seated. Just like them, yesterday, they, the first sent. The same play, the same director, the same content, only The actors have changed.

An infernal sun sends its cruel rays on our troubled heart. You get thirsty. Water! A little water! The lips are dry, the throat is dry. Water! There is no one who should give us a drop. The ministering angels of your nights are ourselves. We are the last of the ghetto! The last one!

I cast a blank, almost apathetic look at our house, where I lived my childhood, where I sought my God, where I fasted to bring Christ, where I sought my way in life. Sad? No. I was not sad. Some kind of light or a shadow of unreality poured over the Rog house (Slangen street number 1), on my childish thoughts.

Get up! It counts! —
got up was counted. Translated. Got up again. Translated again. Ten times like that. Fifteen times. We were a gypsy band. Order gendarmes to drive us out of town. How do gypsies come to town, among pure, civilized people? Gypsies must live far from human settlements! Hey Gendarme! Your task is to drive out gypsies from us! Do your work! Take the gun in hand! Drive!

Finally the long-awaited order:

- Forward!

We start to get excited. First of all, it comes without difficulty. It is difficult to tear oneself away from the past, from the house that symbolized everything that is beautiful, everything that is calm and precious in a person's life. Later you want to run, escape as fast as possible from everything, not looking behind. If God forbade Lot not to look behind himself, it was for Lot's favor.

We stretch slowly and quietly. Tears in the eyes of my father: my heart is torn to pieces. He had never seen his father cry. He was a strong, strict man, with an iron will, with a firm character. Never even imagine that the father is incapable of crying...

The mother walks with thoughtful, dreamy eyes. she doesn't cry has already made peace with her fate.

I'm going. The backpack is heavy, too heavy. It seems that I am about to break together under his weight. Then I glance at my little sister, Zfurhle. Her blonde hair combed. A red menu on you. Zpurhle. Seven years old. A flower. Tender and sensitive. Also on her back - a backpack. She bit her lips. She says: You shouldn't cry, you shouldn't complain, it doesn't help. I also bite my lips and my backpack weighs less. The gendarmes shout with their kanchikes: faster!

There is no power. There is no power anymore. The road has just begun and the last bit of strength has been exhausted.

That's what we thought. a mistake...

where are we going To the unknown, to a rendezvous, to a meeting with fate.

- Faster! Faster! touch you! Scream the Hungarian Angels.

At that moment I began to hate them, the Hungarian enemies of Israel. And my hatred towards them continues to this day. They were the first fine ones of ours. And the first taste of hell is hard to forget.

- Touch you! Squeal the canchikes in their hands.

Faster? to what? to when? Why hurry? What will we delay, what do we have to delay, if we will arrive an hour later, a year later?

There is no power. Invisible iron chains on our feet. Every step grinds fine. It seems: soon the legs will refuse to carry us further. But an inner voice calls, wakes up: go! Do not fall in the beginning way! A little more, another minute, two more minutes and we will arrive. People go. In order to forget my pain, I glance at my mother. Our common flag is reflected In her silent face.

Now the gendarmes are running. You run. There is no choice. Who ever imagined that we are so healthy, so strong? That we have so much power in ourselves?

Fate drives, fate calls, one runs.

Finally!

We have arrived.

Quickly threw down the backpack. automatically sat down on the dry ground. A tired prayer woke up in his heart:

- Lord of the worlds! Do us a favor! Should we not have to rise again from this place...

Immediately God was still able to listen to a man's prayer...

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In a small ghetto.

Three days ago, people lived here. People for whom every thing from home was a source of memories. Now we have taken their place. They - they were driven out. Off. Sent the next day. Countless hours have passed and already we have forgotten without them, as if they would never have been here.

A fearful disorder in the homes. A proof that their one inhabitants had to leave their homes suddenly, in a sudden thick way.

In the upper part of Yarash lived my uncle Mendel, the father's brother. With him at home - a plate of sum on the table, kneaded dough in the kitchen. Mendel did not appear to eat the soup; His wife, Golda, did not appear to be baking the dough. In the corner, on some books. Mendel was a Hasidic young man, — The earth God-fearing. He probably wanted to take books with him first, but there was no room for them in his backpack.

My sisters are looking for a suitable apartment in which we will live for a few days. Found. Three empty rooms. We arrange one. do you hear We arrange one...

I bring wood. The sisters make a fire. The father goes to bring news. And the mother - she had a lot of superhuman strength in her: despite her tiredness, she immediately prepared to put something in her mouth.

Eat, children! Eat! Gather powers! You must persevere... —

The phrase was often repeated: endure, endure endure!

In the small ghetto, the mood was not down. We have already crossed the border of fear and therefore we have accepted everything with love, in every good detail we have seen a very pleasant review.

Jews in Gos even joked and held hope

Speeches: The Germans will not prove to send us away... those who left perished; But - us? They will let us live out our poor lives here until the end of the war. There are rational, logical reasons for this.

Naronim!

At the beginning of 1944, we still believed in such beliefs

Assumptions!

The ghetto was not guarded. Actually, everyone could go in and out freely, unhindered.

Our non-Jewish maid, Maria, entered the ghetto and begged us, with tears in her eyes, to come to her in the village, she will hide us! She prepared a bunker, food, everything! Nothing will happen to us! It will us Nothing missing! Only we should agree, only we should come... My father didn't want to hear anything. To me and to the two To my older sisters, Deborah and Batya, he said: If you want to go! Goes with Marian. Me, the mother and Zofura will stay... —

Well, leave your parents! And precisely at such an hour!

We stayed in the ghetto.

If we had known what was waiting for us, if we had done what so many Jewish organizations in the world knew - that there was a Treblinka, an Auschwitz, a Maidanek - we certainly would not have stayed.

The ghetto was open. Some distance from us - the mountains. The high mountains with their natural bunkers, with their eternal hollow holes... Anyone who wants - can get there in 5 minutes! The last chance!

But no one took advantage of this last chance. Nobody knew about Treblinka and Majdanek. — Nobody escaped. Escape means risk. danger withdraw from the norm. No one wanted that. The general mood was: what will happen to the whole rule - will also happen to us. And what can happen? Rumors spread that we were being taken to work in a brick factory. Well, you will work, you don't die from work.

False and dangerous optimism...

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Night.

No one waited, no one asked for the morning star. Everyone wished: I wish the night would last into eternity.

The faded carpet that covered the sky awakened sadness, sadness in the heart. It turned out that every star is just a spark of a mighty fire that flares up in us.. and should the fire go out, the stars will also lose their melancholy light.

Night.

You have to go into the house, lie down in someone else's bed, try to close your eyes and sleep, rest. The mother was named. Who knows what tomorrow may bring. You have to gather strength. persevere Night. The first night outside my home.

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In the morning, the new life in the small ghetto took shape. It felt like being on summer vacation: in a temporary home.

And we began to get used to the worst condition of human life: insecurity. Knowing with certainty - what we would have — known was waiting for us, what was prepared for us - each one would have acted according to his understanding, according to his will: went to death or refused to go to it. But so? Sit with folded hands and wait like a beggar on the graves? Nevertheless, the fear did not find its expression in words or in deeds. On the contrary: they tried to hide him, the fear, the more, the deeper under a mask of indifference and hope.

Tens of hypotheses were born every few minutes for each Jew. All had a common point: optimism.

Someone said:

- Maybe we are being led away for our own good? You know of course: the front is approaching... cannons, Hormat bombs... do the Germans want to prevent Jewish victims?

Stupid Jew! He has no other worries, the German, than taking care of our rest...

Another, a bit of a pessimist, says: There is a little truth in the A, hypothesis. There is a connection — between our being sent and the approach of the front. Simply: the German army is afraid of a Jewish partisan...

A third Jew says:

My opinion is that the whole transportation issue is not —

Something other than a comedy. Don't laugh, listen: the Germans want to rob our gold and money. But do they know that our treasures are buried in the earth. They want to search for it and it's more convenient to search while the owners are on vacation...

On vacation!

There was nothing to do in the ghetto, people passed the time and worries by giving optimistic speeches in which no one, especially the speakers themselves, believed. —

But outwardly, the mood was good. Often even a high one. The few days we spent there were completely calm and pleasant. Relations between Jews were friendly. There were no more privileged people, no rich people, no prominent — personalities. All of us have become the true equality - in the eyes of tomorrow. We were all condemned to something" - to the same something" without knowing its meaning.

The days went on long, they felt. The only question we used to ask ourselves: where will we be in a week?

Who knows?

...Thus the week is spent in expectation, in false confidence, in false-sounding confidence.

The last week in the city of my childhood.

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deportation Saturday, the day of rest, was our day —

Friday night we still had a Shabbat feast. The father made Kiddush on Chlot (there was no longer any kosher wine) and homeless children moved in from the neighboring apartments.

Ruth sang. During the feast we were silent. We sat sad, thoughtful. We felt: this is the last time we sit together at the same table.

There is a lot of sadness, a lot of joy in the concept: the last time... we went to sleep early. In the morning we leave the ghetto. the city. An uneasy night. It was impossible to fall asleep. in the morning. We are leaving the ghetto. This time the Johnny Darmen did not use their guns and rifles. An agreement was made between the Jewish council and the Hungarian police: since the last shipment consists of important Jewish personalities, the entire deportation work will be done by the Jewish police alone.

They lead us through the main streets. In the direction of the Gray Sir School. The city seems to be busy. But this is only one such pressure. In truth, the gentiles are good and loyal friends! - behind closed windows and wait for the moment when they will be able to break into Jewish apartments and loot Jewish property.

Impatient birds of prey..

A couple of Hungarians are even standing in the street with a joyful expression on their pigmy and vulgar faces: here, they are freed from the Jews. Not on a day two, not in a compromising way, but really forever!

Good thing the road wasn't any longer. Good thing we arrived quickly at the big school. Good thing you don't have to see more shame and disappointment pictures.

In the big school.

Full of Jews, full of tears, full of tears. The school resembles a train station. The priest disappeared, the Holy Ark - a naked, the Balemer - defiled. A trib but light on the gray walls. A familiar light... it turns the face pale, it calls out

Wrinkle on the forehead... When have I seen such a light? Yes, I remember: by slihoth, a slihoth candle. Perhaps it is symbolic: both now and at Selihot we stand before the Day of Judgment.

A strange smell in the air. A rotten smell, an unclean smell. Clearly: leaving the school is not allowed, there are weak Jews who can't contain themselves until tomorrow... Horrible!

How can Jews desecrate a holy place? I - a devout yeshiva boy who recently became a bar mitzvah - could not grasp this.

Then I still thought - I was still a child! - That troubles cannot completely break the Jew, the Jewish person, that some remnant of his religious backbone will prevail over everything. Later I recognized my mistake. Adversity is stronger than man. Troubles make the strong weak and the strong weak.

Downstairs, in the men's school, only men. Above, in the help of women. Only women. That's what the gendarmes wanted.

Komish: It's Saturday today. Isn't this all a dream? A high level of fun from God's right hand, the devil? Didn't the Jews come - simply to pray? Or listen to the Rabbi's sermon? Somehow you don't want to believe that the gray, big school is a place for revisions, to prepare for the journey...

Someone says:

- We will stay here all day and all night. Tomorrow they will drive us in.

Funny: we are still here, in the city, a few meters from home and - already we have a new terminology on our tongue. We're already acting like old, born-again... wagoners!

Immediately we would trade in goods, in animals and not in ourselves...

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Sunday in the morning. The deportation march is renewed. We are going to the train station. Animal wagons are waiting for us. Barred windows. The Hungarian gendarmes push in, with brutal force 80 people in each wagon. We get some bread, some water.

The windows are checked, whether the bars hold well. The wagons are sealed. Two police officers appear on the platform. They smile: happy with the work.

A person in charge was appointed in each wagon. He bears the responsibility for the wagon and for everything that will happen in it. If someone escapes - he, the person responsible, is shot. On the roof of each wagon - car arms. So that the hypothesis is improbable for two reasons: A) impossible to escape. b) Nobody thinks about escaping at all. It was agreed with Ani Heib, we will also be reconciled with the end. Whoever says A must say B. A heavy silence falls on one in the wagon.

A loud whistle from the car cuts through the smoky air. The wheels start turning. First slowly, then - with more rhythm, with more tempo. We send farewell thoughts to our old homes, to our memories, to the witnesses of our troubled years. We pass. where? Again the old question, which has been the crux question of our existence for a week. Where are we going?

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It's a terribly cramped EU wagon. Lying is forbidden. Sitting is also difficult. We share one. You sit down according to the queue. Little air.

Happy are those who stand near a window. They look out to the running phase and say that he is glorious, prosperous. We still believe that we are being taken to a labor camp in Hungary.

On the second day of the trial, the prisoner began to suffer. Then - the heat. There was no water. There was no air. Even breathing became difficult.

Due to the crowd, many instincts were awakened in Kerry Fair. erotic instincts, and under the curtain of the night young men and women allowed themselves to be dominated by their inflamed senses.

Here is the first result of disaster: erotic freedom. The tension of the last few days was now looking for a way to vent and the easiest was - an erotic one.

The erotic scenes did not arouse any protests from the elderly Jews. They closed their ears and eyes, pretended not to see and not to hear. In moments of danger, the chains of conventional morality fall away. People thought: Who knows what tomorrow might bring? Should youth take advantage of this today, squeeze out of it the last drop of enjoyment...

No food was missing. Did everyone bring a few spare parts? Nevertheless, we did not eat enough. The Ekai Namie principle: save for tomorrow. Tomorrow is also a day and maybe a black day.

Floods - a shower on the passing field. The air becomes cooler, more pleasant. The nerves are also calmed.

I think: here I am already in the third home for a week. And each home is distinguished by what it shares with a larger number of souls.

Now they are taking me to a fourth home. Will she be the last? The very last one?

We arrived at Kašau, a city near the Slovak border

Here we suddenly understood the truth. We are not staying in Hungary. We were deceived, led astray. From Kashaw you drive to... Germany.

How did we allow ourselves to be deceived? How did we not foresee this possibility?

Too late to look around.

Besides, there is no time to think about the new situation. The door of the wagon opens. A German officer appears in it, accompanied by a Hungarian lieutenant. The German gives a speech and the Hungarian lieutenant translates:

- From now on, anyone who has money, or gold, or watches will pass under the authority of the German army - should give it here. We will make revisions. By the time we find something - will be shot. This is one. Number two: the one who feels sick, can move in the hospital car. That's all.

The Hungarian officer walked around among us and collected money and watches in a basket from a number of people who did not want to feel the taste of fear.

The fear dug into our hearts already before, right after we saw the German officer. He had cold eyes and a cruel smile around his plump lips. If we had a more developed sense of reality, we would be able to read our future in his eyes. But it was precisely this sense that we lacked.

There are eighty men in the wagon, the German calls out at the end, if — someone is missing you will all be shot... Here is the reality!

Not wanting to acknowledge them until now, she took revenge on us. Here she is before our eyes, in horrible nakedness.

The officers left the wagon and behind them the doors closed completely. A mood of regret suddenly dominated the crowd.

— - What did we do - called out a voice, crawling into the neck of the animal... if we knew... when... literally

No, now the last doubt has disappeared. We fell into the fold. The door is hammered. The way back closed. There is no way back. There is no more hope, no way out and no choice. You have to wait, have patience and wait and see. What has to come - will come anyway.

A couple of Jews tore up their clothes, took out banknotes from hidden places and burned them: a shame they should fall into the hands of the enemy.

A weak voice of protest was still heard from the corner, that it is an offense to burn money, that it is not allowed to pass on master tashchit, that it can still be useful, but - it did not find any great response.

We began to see everything more clearly, bolder. Suddenly we understood that fate had a hand in hand with us Tragic game played. A game whose end lies in the darkness.

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During the third night of our journey, a strange incident happened in our wagon which I do not understand until today.

A psycho-pathological incident, or if you like: an incomprehensible, an abnormal phenomenon of feeling. I don't believe in preconceptions. No man is able to foresee, or anticipate his future. Otherwise - we would

I had to accept the assumption that there is a fatalism in a person's life, that everything is written from the future and that a person cannot choose his future, his fate, and I fight with all my convictions against this fatalism in philosophy. Nevertheless, the incident of that third night is a sharp contradiction to my philosophical attitudes.

Here's what happened:

An elderly woman was traveling together with us, in the same carriage. Her name: Mrs. Schechter. About 50 years old. Next to her sat, sad and longing, her ten-year-old boy. Her husband and her two older sons were sent with the first shipment - by mistake - and the separation hurt her very much.

I knew Mrs. Schechter well. She used to come into our house and shop often. She was a quiet woman, with fiery eyes that were always strained. Her husband was a beit midrash sitter, a devout Torah Jew, who used to pray at midnight and weep on the exile of the Shekinah, and she - his wife - was the breadwinner. I also knew her parents' son - Yossi - well. In the ghetto we often played chess.

Has Mrs. Schechter suddenly lost her mind...

Already at the beginning, on the first day of the journey, she did not stop Wept and lamented her misfortune, which separated her from her children, from her husband, but the crying was still natural, logical. Later it acquired colors of hysteria and finally accents of madness...

It happened around twelve at night. Half of the people slept sitting up, one in each other's lap and half of the people tried to sleep standing up. Flotzim's cry burst into the silent night:

- A fire! Jews! I see a fire! I see a fire!

In the face of the OA, scene, of boy's mute sorrow. The boy scared me
more than his mother.
No one has heard of death camps yet. About crematories - of course not. It
was impossible to even imagine that her hysterical violence was
— suppressing a reality. Nevertheless, I remember now: there was an
external true sound in it
her voice
Women comforted her:
You will see each other with yours, wait, have patience, another couple —
Days, you will see.
But she didn't listen to anyone except her own
Voice:
Jews! I see a fi-e-er! —
An obsession immediately entered her.
We said and interpreted her madness:
She's probably hot and thirsty, that's why she's talking —
About fire.
But Mrs. Schechter's madness had a bad effect on us. The
nerves tightened like strings. And the more she cried. All the more, her
words cast a fear on us.
Without a choice, young men tied her hands and shoved a mask into
her mouth.
The ancient method: the prophet is murdered, meaning thereby to prevent
the bad prophecies of his own.
The woman was silenced. Her boy continued to sit at her feet
and did not cry, only his eyes were awake
grown older, older.
We breathed free. The voice of fate was silenced. Now
you can continue to sleep, dream, dream, forget... two
hours later - a fresh scream tore us out of

We all jumped out of place. The scream stirred the nerves,
awakened the fear.
Who shouted it?
Soon we saw her: Mrs. Schechter. She stood in the middle of the wagon,
like a dry tree on a rained field and pointed with her finger
somewhere, in an unknown direction:
- Look! See! Jews, I see a fire! A fire! Have mercy! A fi-er!
People jumped to the barred windows and stared out at the
night outside, tried to turn in the darkness: where is it, the fire? In vain. There
is no fire. Not even a man, no sign of a fire in the surrounding silent night.

A commotion in the wagon. First - we were too overwhelmed by her words.
Our senses fluttered, the tongue - she didn't seem to utter a
word. A kind of strange silence dominated us all. The train
moved on with its monotonous rhythm. This lasted a few minutes. Then - people
realized that it is dangerous to think too much about her words, better
—
See in her a madman.
People whispered from ear to ear:
- Mrs. Schechter... poor thing... gone crazy... a miracle?
People ran to her, brought her water (despite the lack of
water), put wet towels on her forehead, tried to calm her down. But
she kept shouting and always the same words: She sees
A fire! She sees a fire...
Next to her, on the wet floor, sat her little boy. He also tried to
calm his mother, taking her by the hand
And a prayer:
- Mother, calm down, calm down, mother...
A tremor seized me. Something tragic struck

Sleep: The madwoman (that's what she was called) appeared to ba-Free her hands and she screams again: Yi-Dan! A fire! Have mercy! See! See the fire! Fie-er! How did she — manage to free herself from the ropes? Her boy looked at us with bitter, saddened eyes. Maybe he did understand his mother. Soon, boys joined the work, tied her hands, shoved a mask in her mouth and this time beat her too!

She did not respond. No pain felt. What is the nature of a body when the soul has reached the highest level of pain? Somehow we were afraid of her voice, of the strange sound of her words. Did you really encourage the boys:

- Let her be silent, the crazy one! She should be silent! What does she mean? Is she alone in the wagon? There are children in the wagon and they can get scared...' Did boys beat her. Her boy didn't use everything. Only his childish eyes became drier, older, deeper. It was a fearful night. The next morning she calmed down. She sat huddled in a corner and stared, with staring eyes, into the empty space, immediately she would not see us at all. Her looks did not reflect any madness, the looks of a madman — are empty. Hers were full. They had so much joy, so much fear. That you couldn't stand her look.

It is good that she is silent. But her silence did not last long. At night she was speechless again, went crazy. The same hysterical violence: she sees a fire!

It is impossible to describe with poor human words what we felt then, what we experienced then. The driving, the thirst, the heat, the tightness - everything was as nothing against the fear that attacked us, while the madwoman sent us her prophetic screams, pointing her finger at the clouded dark sky, describing the fire of tomorrow, the flames of the future...

And the more we drove, the sharper, the sharper her voices became. Clear: we really tried to convince ourselves that we have to deal with a madman, that her words are like dust, that they do not contain any clues about our lives. We tried to think logically. But we did not succeed. The heart is not logical. And a Shuzime has a business: and maybe she's not crazy? Maybe she's the only normal woman in the wagon? Maybe she really sees a fire and if we don't see it, is it a sign that we are blind?! From minute to minute our tension grew. We have become sensitive, nervous. A word from her literally brought us out of the dishes. We were careful not to light any matches. In order not to destroy her imagination, her power. It lasted two days. If we were to drive in the same conditions after a few days - we would also lose our minds. Madness is, it seems, an infectious disease. Then we arrived at a station in Upper Silesia. Those who were standing near the windows told us the name of the station:

- Auschwitz! People start browsing their memories, remind themselves something about Auschwitz. Without success. No one has ever heard that name. No one knows what once happened in Auschwitz, what is produced in Auschwitz.

Only one person, one single person, now, writing these lines, I am almost certain of this. correct: felt. She, the crazy one. She knew everything. But - she was silent. Two o'clock in the afternoon only. Too early, she is used to warning at night. Monotonous hours disappear like ships on the sea. Somehow we stay too much here, in Auschwitz. Suddenly the doors of the wagon opened. Two people like Descend bring water. Returning they told: They gave a (hidden) gold watch with a German charm. He seems to be a decent person according to their words. He said that we have arrived at the end station. It means: here we are being thrown out. Here is the new home. Not far from here there is a camp, a labor camp. Excellent conditions. Families will live together. Only young people will work in factories. Old and weak - will be employed in field work. In short: a paradise.

We didn't need more. The mood became a free joke. The barometer of confidence gave a jump up to its highest numbers. An end to fear, an end to worries!

The heart - a mistake! Praise be to God! Only the crazy one continued to sit, curled up inside her Corner and silence. The boy at her feet caressed her hands. Somewhere in the west the sun has set. She would not want to stay and watch the last act of our tragedies, the continuation of our dreams, the end of the great illusion.

Am the sun. The wagon fills with shadows. I don't know why: this picture reminds me of three feasts at the rabbi's. The air, loaded with mystery, with clues. The heart - how lead would be in it. It wants to talk, but there are no words. The fountain of words dried up. Now one longs for another song, another deeply melancholic song - like at the Rabbi's table, at three feasts - another mystical melody, which should say more of what we have to say, of what we are capable of saying.

In the semi-darkness, in the silence, people eat unleavened bread. The last meal in the wagon. The last meal that was longed for and prepared by her, by her mother. I'm silent. Ten o'clock. After all, at the station of Auschwitz. You should lie down. You can sit down quite calmly and catch up a dream They probably won't take us out at night... why not? That's what logic wants. Harder to outgrow a Transport at night as well as during the day, so the Germans will have to wait See you tomorrow. The mother is pessimistic: Children, she says, children, I have a feeling. The heart — Tell me that we will reach the end of the journey this evening... Don't go to sleep; Side Week: Should We Be Ready... The prophetic feeling of a mother! We made other assumptions: It's absurd, mother. May you sleep peacefully... — And they really tried to catch a dream on account of that Night. Once - the crazy! She woke up from her pre-Rockiness: Here! Here's the fire! Look! — Instinctively, people ran to the windows. The madman's voice was so expressive, so convincing... Gorey

Not! No fire on the horizon. Only the darkness of the night. People crawled back to the places, with a feeling of shame in their hearts: It means! I believed you - even for a second! The madwoman received her daily portion of beatings and with incredible effort succeeded in silencing her. And in order to get rid of her, once and for all, our wagon commandant applied through the window - to a German officer who was walking around the terminal:

Come and drive over a crazy woman in a hospital — car! It is impossible to endure her cries. There are children among us... Patience! Word below a little... Soon she will be transferred to... the hospital!

Eleven o'clock at night.

Now it was impossible to close his eyes. There was an uproar in the air.

Suddenly the train started moving from place. As if a group of snakes would attack us, we jumped to the windows.

The mother prays for us:

Children... I have a feeling... Be ready! —

The train is moving slowly. He is not in a hurry. Ten minutes, fifteen minute. Then he stopped, the train. Through the window, a camp appears, that this is a camp, have We understood because of the electric wires, which stretched for kilometers... electric wires without end, without end.

In between, people forgot without her, without the madman. She took advantage of the general inattention. She is — rose from her place, straightened her body and a cry of bitter pain cut through the turmoil of the night:

Here! Jews! Yes-Dan! See, see the fire! See! —

And her finger pointed to something. We looked in the direction of her finger and saw...

We saw the fire, which was reflected in the shattered face of our prophet... a fire, we saw a fire that goes out from a high, to very high chimneys and whose flames stretch up to the sky, literally up to the sky.

We saw the fire, heard the voice of the madman and still didn't understand everything. Someone called: it's probably a factory chimney... —

Unknowingly he happened. The chimney of a factory... The madwoman was awakened this time by herself. A kind of triumphant expression appeared on her face, as if she was late from us:

Well? I told you, I warned you... you didn't believe. She put rags in my mouth. —

With a fake my words choked!

For long, long minutes we stood there and looked at the fiery building that lit up the sky and the entire horizon.

Some strange smell floats in the air. A wild scream reaches us from a neighboring wagon. There is probably a madman there too, we think.

The wagon doors are opened from the outside. I call myself

- These are of course sanitary. They came to transport the insane in a hospital wagon...

These were not sanitary.

Strange characters as if they came out of a picture of a ghost Destroyed painterly imaginations jumped into the wagon. They were dressed strangely: striped skirts, black pants. In their hands they held electric lamps and sticks. Only their outward appearance gave off a chill.

They started hitting on the right and on the left and first
shouted: — then
Everyone goes down! Leave everything here! Quick! Loos! —
We jumped off the wagon.
I took one last look at the madman. Her boy
Haven't used it yet. He held her by the hand. He led her to
the altar.
...the flames from the chimney blinded the eyes. A
heavy smell, a smell of roasted meat stung his throat.
Twelve o'clock at night.
We have reached the end of the journey.
No Birkenau.

Chapter Two

In the shadow of flames

Everything was left in the wagon: the last few possessions
that allowed us to believe that we still had something.
All things that we dragged on our shoulders, with remains
Sweat and tears, with joy and resignation - all things are done
in the wagon.
And together with them - finally - also our illusions. Now
everything has become clear. The uncertainty has disappeared.

s. s. Men, armed from head to foot, guarded us. On every two
meters - a s. s. Man with his car arms. Here and there a shot is heard and
then a death cry. Heftlingen beat us and we don't know why.

Trot by trot we followed the crowd. The mother, the
father, the grandmother, the three sisters and me.
An extinct sky. Electric wires. Heftlingen. may shen arms.

An S. s. Officer comes towards us. In his hand - a percussion rod
He orders:

Men on the left, women on the right! —

Four words. He told them aloud, almost casually. Four simple, short words. And yet they are the symbol of my mother's love. Because of them, we didn't say goodbye. I didn't even pretend to be the meaning of the order and already I felt my father pressing my hand more firmly: we are left alone, don't get lost!

— I saw for an infinitesimal fraction of a second my mother, with her sisters, as they walked to the right, in an unknown direction. Zfurhle held her mother's hand. At this moment, my poor childish mind did not understand the tragedy that was reflected before my eyes. I saw them go and disappear and... I continued walking with my father, with the men. And I did not know that here, in this place, at this moment, I parted with my mother. With claws, that here I lost both lost forever!

.....Allow me to open a parenthesis. Allow me, dear reader, to close my eyes for a while, oh, just for a short while, in order to relive those moments. Here - I see. You see better with clear eyes. I see the mother going on her last journey. With her left hand, she caressed Zfurhle's golden hair, immediately protecting her from the enemies of the night, she wanted... there she goes, the mother. Between electric wires. Not saying goodbye to you. Not getting that last kiss. Not shown. Everything came so suddenly! It's blue

The heart beats. It is better to close the parenthesis. Behind me, an elderly Jew fell to the ground. next to him stands a s. s. Man. His revolver still smokes. My hand clings to my father's arm. One thought in mind: do not lose him! Don't stay alone! Until then, I had never been alone. Too young. Always had the father or

The mother is next to me, with me. Now the mother is no more. At least he, the father, should stay. I clung to his arms in order to feel more like a child who has someone to protect him. Order of S. s. officers:

- in rows to five!

A riot. It is difficult to get along so that children and parents. Brothers or just friends should be in the same row.

Boy, how old are you? Heftling asks me. His face was in the — dark, but his voice was meek, warm.

Not even 15 years, I answered. —

The Heftling breaks down:

!No! 18 years —

You have a mistake. I answer stubbornly, - I am not yet 18 years old... —

Idiot, he is angry with me, listen to what I say —

You!

Then he asks my father the same question:

- 50 years old, replies my father naively.

The heftling becomes angrier:

- No! Not fifty years! Forty! Do you understand? Eighteen and forty...

We began to realize: one should not be, not too young and not too old.

The heftling is gone. Disappeared with the shadows of the night. Another came up and cursed his lips: son of a bitch, he shouted with wild fury, to which — did you come to what?

Someone dared to answer:

- What do you mean? I think we came for welfare Day, because we wanted, asked to come? The second Heftling didn't bother him:

Shut up! Shut up, Hamor Ben Hamor, before I go to kill — you on the spot! You should have let yourself be killed, where you were and not come here! Didn't you know what was prepared for you here in Auschwitz? Didn't know in 1944? No. We didn't know, nobody told us anything. The Heftling did not want to believe. He warmed up in his words:

- Do you see the chimney there? Do you see him? You see the wonder? (Yes, we saw them, the flames). There, there you will soon be led there. There you come to burial. You still don't understand? Sons of dogs! You don't understand?! I'm going to burn you! Burn! Ash will be made of you! Ash! Ash! Ash!... A hysterical anger attacked him.

His words stunned us. We were left in awe. Couldn't believe his own ears. The own eyes. Isn't all this just a nightmare? An unusual fear Halim? A commotion, a panic, a panic broke out in the ranks.

The fear of death took us by the head and dragged us with it, far, far, to the limit of belief and reality.

Here and there people whispered:

An uprising must be made! Don't get burned! Do not go to — the slaughter like blind sheep! We must revolt!

In our transport there were a couple of healthy young men, hair dressers, meat hawkers, former soldiers. They held knives in their hands and incited the Jews to throw themselves at the armed guards.

A young man whose name unfortunately did not remain in my memory - quietly gave a kind of speech:

Let people know that there is an Auschwitz in the world! That they — burn people! Those who are going to be deceived here should know!

What would happen if our revolutionary boys would carry out their plan? Hard to know. In fact, a couple of machine guns would do their job and promote the work of the Gazi Chamber. We would all die on the spot.

True: It would set a precedent...

there were older Jews - weakened, exhausted who begged for mercy from their children not to commit any foolishness, because — But one should not lose confidence when even the worst is on their neck. This is what our sages said. And they, the sages, obviously knew what they were saying.

maybe? Maybe they knew what they were saying. But they didn't make Birkenau...

What kind of arguments would the scholars of the Talmud hold, if they were sent to Birkenau?

Would they continue to argue about such an important problem as the judgment of a bull goring a cow or an egg hatched on Yom Tov?

The fury, the revolt wind cooled. Not because of cowardice and not because of the requests of the parents. Simply put: suddenly people became skeptical about the truths of both Heftlings. The sense of conservation has awakened in us and therefore blinded our eyes. They said to themselves that it is impossible that all of this should be true, that they should kill us just like that, without a reason, without a reason and without a goal... Impossible that they should go and burn hundreds of innocent Jews, who are not committing any crime.

Bagan...

In the meantime, we are moving forward. Here, a short way. In the middle stood Dr. Mengele, the famous Dr. Mengele (a typical S.S.I. officer: a cruel and nevertheless intelligent person, a monocle) who held a wire rod in — his hand. Around him a couple of others. s. Officers. They looked at his manner of

conduct. Dr. Mengele's wand moved non-stop. Sometimes it pointed to the
right and sometimes to the left.
The selection!
Here the sentence of hundreds of thousands of people is sealed. As the shepherd of
Edro... I live and I die. What are you doing...
I remembered the advice of unknown Heftling's father! - I whisper
to him father, don't forget! you are —
40 years old! Not 150
And now I'm standing in front of him, in front of Dr. Mengele:
How old are you? —
An impersonal voice that even tries to put on a garment of kindness and
paternal understanding.
Eighteen years. —
A trembling voice... almost unable to speak from fear and fear.
Health? —
Yes. —
Occupation? —
The mind worked fast. Say that I'm a Yeshiva boy who teaches
Kabbalah? The mouth whispers out of itself,
Not waiting for the special order:
Agriculture. —
This conversation did not last more than a few seconds. But it seemed to me
that hours had passed in between
One word and another.
This stick shows: links. I don't go full speed ahead. Only half.
First, I wanted to see where my father was.
sending He goes to the right - I will run with him.
The stick of fate also sent him to the left. A stone fell from my
heart. Now you can breathe.
At this point, we still don't know which direction is the right one - the left
or the right - which leads to work.

And which ones to the crematorium. Nevertheless, I felt happy:
together with my father.
A fresh Heftling approaches us:
- Well? Happy?
Yes, someone answers. —
Idiots! - Exclaims the Heftling, - You are going straight away —
In the chimney!!!
They lead us to the chimney...
Is it true? Isn't he just out to scare us? Isn't he just a sadist who
enjoys that fear?
No. It appears that he is telling the truth. A sign: sixty meters ahead
Us, rising on flames from a pit. Huge flames. Something is burning
there. what? A truck approaches the pit and automatically unloads
its cargo. Suddenly, I see what he's doing, what he's throwing
into the pit: little children! Babies! Little games! Yes, I saw it
with my own eyes... saw how they throw living children into the
flames!
(Is it any wonder, dear reader, that sleep no longer comes
to my eyes since then? Is it any wonder that I stopped believing
in the sanctity of fire? In the Shekhinah that must rest on
Eullat and Yoonkim?).
The blood hardens in the veins. Cold frosty winds blew
my body. That is to say, we are really going to the
chimney. In the direction of the flame pit. There is probably
another pit a little further on, a bigger one: for adults.
for us. for me
Instinctively I pinch myself in the cheek: Am I alive? Am
I watching? Is it not a dream of a hyper-sensitive child? Maybe it's
a shocking vision? Or completely a feverish image? A fruit
From my sick imagination?
I pinched my cheek, felt the pain of the knot and

Still did not believe in the reality of the events. Because one single thought gave birth to my mind: how is it possible, how is it possible, that people should be burned here and she, the world, should be silent?! How is it possible that live children should be thrown in here - like coal in open fire graves and the civilized world, the cultural, the progressive world of ours should not raise its voice of anger and protest?

- Impossible... unbelievable... - I muttered to myself.

The world would not be silent. Humanity would respond, would revolt or at least react. We obviously do not live in the Middle Ages, but in the advanced twentieth century! Once upon a time, the man's life was free, but today? No. All this is not true, all this cannot be true. a dream It is only a dream. i dream A nightmare... Soon, soon I will wake up from sleep - with such a heart beat and will see my children's home, the bookshelves...

My father's voice snapped me out of my fantasy debate:

- It's a pity... it's a pity that you didn't go with the Mai Man... I've seen many children, even at your age, walking with their mothers... :

She was incredibly sad, his voice. I understood: he doesn't want to see what's going on with me! He doesn't want to see how his only son is burned alive... Because you must know: back then we still didn't know about the perfection of the German death factory, about the elegant gas chambers. We thought: simply - they burn people alive... and we even wondered: how come that We don't hear any screams? Any trouble calling? A cold sweat broke out on me. Die in the fire! The

Terrible death. The longest. No, I don't want to go through such a death; No way! But why pain the father? I tell him that I don't believe that people should be burned in our modern world. Humanity would not allow it...

- Humanity? - Answers the father - Humanity is not interested in us. She would not dip a finger in cold water for us, our era is the era of possibilities, of unlimited possibilities... Today everything is possible, everything is permitted: even cummens...

His voice choked with suppressed tears.

- Father, I say, if so I commit suicide. I will run to the electric wires. Let me be shot, otherwise I will be electrocuted. It's better to die at once, before you die... fight the flames for hours... If you die, father, it should be like a man and not like wood!

He did not answer, my father. He cried. His whole body ached, his whole being spasmed with tears. Everyone cried.

Someone started saying Kaddish. Another - confession. I don't know if something like this has already happened even in the fine history of the Jewish people: people say Kaddish after themselves! You will grow... You will be sanctified... Shemiah Rabbi... I also hear the Father Murmur.

This is where I rebelled against God for the first time, against God, blessed be He.

Why sanctify his name? Why does it happen to him? What did he do to earn it? If humanity is silent, then I do not sanctify its name. But he too, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord of the Great, the Great and the Great, he too is silent. Why should I thank him? Why sanctify his name? Why praise him?

In between, people move forward. We are approaching the grave, the flames. It's hellishly hot from there. After twenty years, if I intend to commit suicide, I must prepare. Another fifteen span. I bite my lips, so that my father won't hear the beating of my heart, the wild chattering of my teeth. Another ten span. Eight. Seven span. We walk slowly, as if on a procession, as on one's own procession. Four span: I feel hot and cold together. Ot. Three spans. Here, the grave, here, the flames. I gather strength, the last bit of strength, in order to jump out of the queue and run to the losing wires. In my heart, I say goodbye to my father and the whole world, and unwillingly, words form in the temple, without them crossing the threshold of my mouth: May God bless you. Nevertheless thought about him, about God. Still too close then to my past, to my illusions. The heart is bursting from too much tension. Already! Here, the rendezvous with the Angel of Death... No. It was an unreasonable fear. Two steps before the pit, we were told to turn left: to the bathroom barracks.

The breath became longer, more lasting.
saved.
For how long? For how long?
I squeeze my father's hand more firmly. Suddenly he calls himself:
You remember... remember the crazy one? —
Do I remember her?
I will never forget her, never!

⁂

I will never forget that night as well, the first Lai Ger night, which turned my whole life into one long night. I will never forget that smoke that had Brought up my mother and made sacrifices before heaven.

I will never forget the little faceless children. What I saw
their bodies and souls turn into clouds on the chest, criminally silent
sky.
I will never forget the fire that forever burned my belief in
everything that is beautiful, in everything that is true, in everything
that is holy.
I will never forget that silence of the night which robbed me
of the desire to live and the possibility of making peace with the future.

I will never forget those moments that killed my God in my soul
and my whole dream in a desert before I walked.

I will never forget all this, even when I will be condemned to live
longer than God himself! Never!

⁂

In the bathroom barracks.

A long hall. In the roof - a pair of blue windows. This is what the corridor of hell must look like. So many upset people, so much violence, so much screaming, so much bestial brutality! Almost impossible to stand here for three minutes.

Dozens of heftlings greeted us with sticks in hand and they hit, not looking where, not saying why.

Order: Undress! In full! Naked! Quick! Loos! Only the belt and the shoes may be held in the hand...

The clothes had to be worn in the back barracks. A huge mountain of costumes had already gathered there. Beautiful, elegant costumes and old, tattered coats. Everyone mingled together. Here is the true equality: the equality of clothes.

Naked. I'm shivering with cold. A couple of s. s. Officers roam the barracks looking for Healthy, especially healthy people. If health is such a good article here, maybe they are shoved in the eyes? Trying to pretend to be a hero? Worth it or not worth it? The father's answer - a negative one. Better not to push, better to wait. What will be with the rule, will also be with us.

Later we found out how well we did. All those who were selected then by the s. s. Officers were led to the Zonder commando". That is: the commando that worked in the crematorium. The work was a murderous hour. And after every three months, the entire Kai commando was liquidated. Too much knowledge!

Bela Katz - the son of a well-known fish merchant - is Annie Arrived in Birkenau with the first shipment. A week for us. When he found out that we were already here, he sent us a letter saying: "I made Bura Mori Hash on my father!".

He burned with his own hands - his old father... He was also not allowed to be healthy in Birkenau. - The angels of destruction continue to strike in the bathroom barracks: To the hairdresser!

Holding the bag with the shoes in my right hand, I allow myself to be pushed to the hairdresser. Dozens of hairdressers work here. "Cruelty" animals! Their machines with a sadistic pleasure tore the hair from the head, from under the arm and from the hidden parts of the body. It seems that man forgets his own suffering, if he Painful pain is his fate friend. And probably they too, the hairdressers, suffered a lot. Still the same thought in the mind: don't sweat it

of parent. We always stay together, almost invisible bonds would bind us to each other. When we were both rescued from the hairdresser's hands, we wandered a bit among the crowd, meeting friends and acquaintances. A joy - I repeat: a joy! - Dominant at such a meeting: Praise be to God! You too are still alive...

A couple of older acquaintances are crying. They use their lazy energy to cry: such a devilish night! Why didn't they die on their own bed? Nine baddies in their complaint.

Now the situation has become clear to everyone. We are in the extermination camp of Birkenau, where gas chambers and Cray Motors and fire graves kill hundreds of thousands of people. Now we already know it, although no one is able to understand the meaning, the real and philosophical meaning of these words. Suddenly, someone fell on my neck and kissed me: Yehiel, the Siget Rabbi's brother. He cries with tears of blood And a demon dances on his lips. I thought he was crying for joy that he was alive.

- Don't cry Yehiel, I say to him, it's a pity the tears! not cry? he asks with a cry. - We are standing before the gate of death! Soon we will come inside... understand? Inside! And I should not cry?

Yehiel still did not believe that we were saved even for a while. So cried and kissed me: — he wanted to say goodbye to me. He was not the only one. Many did not believe that there are still sunny days and calm nights waiting for us, that we have not yet drunk the cup of life to the bottom. too close We stood to death! Through the blue windows of the roof, the night began

Wash off the dark spots. The darkness gradually and imperceptibly thinned. I stopped being afraid. I felt the death inside me, he didn't scare me anymore. And secondly - a superhuman stupid fatigue has attacked me. The journey, the madness, the tension. The arrival, the selection - everything together broke me and drained me of the last bit of strength. It was impossible to keep the eyes open. They closed themselves off. They had absorbed too many shocking images during the last couple of hours. We didn't think at all about those who left us. We talked about them - who knows what happened to them" - but did not think about their fate. Simply: we were not able to think about what should not be. The senses were dulled. Everything around was immersed in fog. As if in a super legend. The sense of conservation, the sense of resistance. The sense of self-respect - everything disappeared from us, like from a pack of leper dogs. And with the last spark of clarity, it dawned on us that we are damned souls on the world of chaos, souls that must wander in the world, until the end of all generations - looking for a fix, looking for a way to forget what we saw and not find it.

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Around five o'clock in the morning they drove us out on the hill Court. Heftlingen continued to beat us, but I stopped feeling pain. So many graves were dug in the heart during the night that the physical suffering caused a kind of mosaicism.

Enjoyment: a pleasure that we also suffer... that we have not left them in the loneliness of sorrow. A cold wind hardens the tears in the eyes. We are naked. In hand - the shoes and the suit. Command: Run! You run. After a couple of minutes run: in a new barrack. A passport with kerosene in the door. Disinfection. Everyone is baptized. Then - a hot mascara. And all this - lightning fast. Out from under the hot water - directly in the open yard. I've been running for a while. A third barrack: the magazine. Long tables. Heaps of hefty clothes. Running, they throw us pants, a jacket, a shirt and socks. Counted seconds later, we became people: Heftlingen.

If the situation had not been so tragic, I would have laughed wildly. It was amazing to see so many Bai Kante and friends in their new clothes! Mayer Khats, a healthy, firmly built man, received children's trousers, and stars, a Lower withered Jew - a giant's skirt. They immediately gave themselves an advice: organize an exchange of Clothes. How quickly did you adapt to the newly created situation... I glanced at my father and - for the thousandth time - my world became dark: he has changed so much, my father! For countless hours, his face lost color and expression. His eyes became darker, more petrified, more open. I wanted to tell him something, but I didn't know what, and if I did know, I wouldn't know: how?

The last remnants of the night have disappeared. Here, the morning star in the east. I never had to say -

More than now on purpose, the prayer of resurrection: I confess before you, King, living and alive, that you restored my soul to me with great compassion. Soon the sun will rise. Soon its warm rays will penetrate with force in Birkenau and fill with longing the hearts of thousands of victims. The first day of Birkenau is approaching with animal steps. In the heart, on the soul is so cold, so cold...

In the last night I became a different person. I am no longer what I once was. The yeshiva boy, the child in me was burned. What remains is someone who is similar only to me, but who has nothing to do with my past. A black fire tore into my soul and destroyed it.

There were so many new things around me, which should have aroused curiosity, but I was not curious. Everything suddenly seemed so natural. Everything: the chimney from which a black smoke wafted towards the sky, the contents of the smoke whose bodies??? - The Heftlingen, Sun and myself. So many events have unfolded over the past — the couple of years hours, that we have lost the sense of time, of duration.

When did we leave home? And the ghetto? And this train? Only a week? No more? One night only - one night?

Unbelievable.

When did we arrive at the concentration camp, in the world full of electric wires? Yesterday?! Only a few years ago?

Incomprehensible.

Since when are we standing here, like this, in the wind, in front of the magazine barracks for an hour? Just an hour? Sixty minutes? We live outside of time. Time is a concept for normal

People, for free people. We are not free and maybe not normal anymore.

The old magic thought awakens again: 'And maybe it's a dream? Is it also a dream outside of time? No, this was far from being a dream.

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Heftlingen worked not far from us. Some dug graves, others dragged sand or carried large cauldrons of black coffee. None of them looked at us, we were dry trees in the heart of a desolate desert. Without life, without desire to live. Behind me, people whispered. I wasn't even interested in hearing what they were talking about, who was talking and what they were talking about. What is the NFC Mina?

No one dared to speak loudly. Although no murderous figure was standing nearby. Just - he whispered. Maybe people couldn't speak out loud at all? Because of the smoke, because of the thick smoke, which stung so much, stuck in my throat...

After a certain time, we were brought into a new barrack - somewhere - in the gypsy camp and we were lined up in rows of five.

Do not move from place! - was the order. —

There was no floor in the barracks. Only a roof and four walls. Nothing more. The feet are sunk in the mud. No, they were not sunk in the mud, but in a dirty hum.

People are waiting. People do not move from place. We didn't own a watch. how late is it Impossible to reach. But who cares anyway?

One gets tired of too much rock, a couple of heroes literally fall off their feet and sit down in the mud. The crowd gets angry: Are you crazy? It was called stand, do you really have to sit? You really want to — bring misfortune on our heads with funny words. All the misfortunes of the world were not brought upon us immediately!

Little by little one becomes braver, because - tired. Soon we were all sitting in the mud. Only when someone used to enter the barracks did we jump up and try to stand in the queue.

The result: every few minutes we had to jump up because every few minutes a new Heftling came in. They came to check if one of us didn't have a pair of nice shoes. If so, he used to have to donate them to the Heftling and stay barefoot. Resisting didn't help on the contrary: some of us tried to say no, but they were met with ringing bells and in the end lost their only treasure anyway.

My shoes were brand new, but thanks to the mud, no one noticed them. I made a special 'blessing' that God also created mud in his great, divine world. In this barrack, I slept standing up for the first time in my life. As you can hear: my eyes were drawn to the ground, I was tired - nothing bothered me and I fell asleep standing up. asleep, standing.

—

It goes like this: sleep standing up. I write the A, words and remember that nowadays it sounds so strange, so unreal to my ears... Even I myself who have lived through all this can't understand it Why should you. Dear readers, say? You, who may — anymore... not have been so lucky

To go through what I and hundreds of thousands of others have gone through?

I slept standing up. He closed his eyes for a second then opened them again. And in between dreamed, dreamed a world. Dreamed long, magnificent dreams, about a soft bed, about a tender caress from the mother's hand. Then I woke up: I'm standing in the mud I dreamed that all this was nothing more and nothing else than a dream. Then I woke up: it's not a dream. Reality.

Suddenly the silence in the barrack became even quieter. A high hair, black s. s. Officer entered. With him - the smell of the angel of death. All eyes are on his plump lips. He stood in the middle of the barracks and gave a speech:

You are in a concentration camp. In Auschwitz... pause. — The speaker waited for the effect of his introduction. Involuntarily, people considered him better, the speaker. And his face remained in my memory to this day. A tall man in his thirties. Cruel lips. Eyes that reflected the desire to kill, he looked at us, like a group of sick dogs, who are clinging to life, like a spark of fire that keeps dying.

Remember this! - continues the messenger of death - always — remember this, write it well in your memory. You are in Auschwitz. And Auschwitz is not a place of recreation. This is a cat. Here you have to work. Otherwise - you go straight down the drain. In Krey Matory. Work or in the chimney - the choice is in your hands.

Although we had already listened and seen enough during the last night, although we thought that no more fear could be instilled in us, their dry, cold riches

Shaken us. The word "chimney" was not an empty word here: it floated in the air, along with the smoke. It had a real, tragic meaning.

Auschwitz is not a sanatorium, but a concentration camp, a huge factory, a killing industry. The raw material? Me! We are the raw material. Me, our blood, our flesh. And the industrialist? Here, he stands before us, dressed in black, the color of death.

The officer left the barracks. Right after that, capos appeared and shouted like drunkards:

- All specialists join!

Locksmiths, carpenters, electricians, watchmakers...

Not all specialists came forward. Better stay with us. With the rule. Fearful of one's own initiative, it is better to let oneself be led, to be dragged along with the flow. Let fate do its thing.

Strange: for countless hours we have already adapted to the camp life; People who were real people yesterday, with a character with a will - are now old, tried and tested camp Nikes. They already know what is good and what is not, from the point of view of existence in the camp.

A sign that the strength of a human being is not in his ability to dominate a newly created situation, but in his ability to adapt to it, to adopt.

The specialists have left us. We stayed in the barracks. After a certain time, we were also taken to a... new barrack, this time a stone one. There we already have the right to sit on the stone floor. A black-clad gypsy looked after us.

Suddenly my father got stomach ache.

His eyes are looking for a toilet room. No. Without a choice, he gets up, my father, and goes to the gypsy and politely asks him (in German):

Excuse me please... can she show me the way to — the toilet room?

The gypsy looked at him like a madman. For a very long minute he just looked at him. Looking at him from head to toe, he immediately wanted to see if the man who was talking to him was really a flesh and blood person, a real person with a body and a belly. Then - as if he had woken up from a lethargic sleep - he gave my father a loud slap, which sounded like a dry gun shot in the barracks. The father fell to the ground and crawling on all fours he returned to his previous place.

Barbarians!... Barbarians!... - he muttered. —

I was left as if petrified. I didn't stand up for myself. What happened to me? My own father was beaten - in front of my eyes and I didn't even react! I did not jump up from the place and did not run to help him! I watched and kept silent! If it had happened in normal circumstances, I would have thrown my nails at the brutal killer, and here - did I remain cold, physically indifferent, or did I change so quickly?

A deep sense of shame began to torment me. I thought to myself: I will never forgive myself.

Back then, I still didn't know what a person is capable of under the pressure of circumstances...

My father certainly understood my sorrow, because he whispered in my ear:

- It doesn't hurt me... it doesn't hurt!

And his cheek was on fire, immediately the flames of Birkenau would be reflected in it.

Misty, foggy - in a pained, thoughtless brain: here I am in Auschwitz, in Birkenau. In a foreign, hostile world; In a world like this there is no loyalty from the child to the parents in a world where the hand, the foot, the mouth have no control. Only the eyes know how to see. They cannot be closed. But a change has taken place in them too. They look and do not see. Like the eyes of a dead man: they look and do not see.

We sit on the floor and wait for Fundosni. on what? On whom? Until when? This is the secret of the future. People are waiting. In between, the heart got tired of beating, the eyes got tired of looking and the soul - the soul got tired of throbbing...

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- Outside

Ten black-clad gypsies come to our guard's aid. Eleven canchikes or sticks rise into the air. The legs run, run away. The body tries to hide from the glue - behind any of these bodies.

On the court again. On the blue washed sky - a free sun. Delicate, caressing rays. Some even sneak up on their faces.

Entry! to five! —

It doesn't go too smoothly. Relatives and friends want to be together in the same row. Complications. The sticks are smoking. Bloody heads. Not far from us, the Heftlings, which I have, are still working In the early saw.

There is no guard near them. No one has a whip behind their back. Nevertheless, they work with all their might. a wonder? Here you stand in the shadow of chimneys...

As the black man said. s. Officer in charge Cancer? Work or in the chimney!". Here is the alternative. It wants to fall asleep again. Beneath the sun rises The tiredness. Everything becomes empty. The head, the brain. Everything. I try to let myself be cradled by the waves of dreams. I close my eyes. Should they lead me, the waves, somewhere, far, far...

Come, my son! —

The father pulls me by the arm. We start walking. Finally! Where are you going?

Gates open, close. Many gates. We are still walking between electric barbed wires. Every couple of meters - a white towel, from which a dead head looks down at us. Under it, an inscription: Attention! Death danger!

Have fun! Only there, near the wires, there is a mortal danger! And somewhere else? Is there a place in Birkenau in Auschwitz where? Shouldn't death be lurking on us?

The gypsies stop, stay near a barrack. In their place appear s. s. Men, who surround us. Revolvers, may shine arms, police dogs.

The march lasted half an hour. Then we looked around and saw that there is an end to the electric breakers: they are pre-shugden.

Birkenau remained behind us.

It was a beautiful April day. A spring smell in the air. The sun took a short pause, before it goes to lie down in the west. A romantic sunset. The sun has never been so cold towards us, the sky has never been so far from us, as on this day. There is no more God in heaven, said the wind of the heart. There is no more God in heaven and no more man on earth. The staff - split into two: in angels of death and in the dead.

Am the sun. The eternal fight between day and night, between light and shadow. This time the night passed without any effort.

After a couple of dozen minutes and the eye catches on Fundosny electric circuit breakers. A camp. A fresh camp. Here, the iron gate. An inscription hangs on it: work makes free! The camp stands, it is said, under the sign of Iran.

Auschwitz.

The first impression: better than Birkenau. Stone two-story buildings instead of the Birkenau wooden barracks. Here and there signs of a garden.

We are led to a certain barrack (in high dialect: block) and told to wait. We laid down on the black earth and waited.

In time, a Heftling came out and called some of us in. They didn't come out of the block anymore. Calm down. We lay down for a minute in fear. Then The bathroom. The bathroom was the first facility we encountered in each camp. Whoever changed camps three times a day had to go through the baptism and the mascara ceremony three times.

My father and I decided to get rid of the bath. Arini came into the hall, stripped naked, let himself fall into the naphtha barrel, washed himself. They left my clothes at the door. - You will get others! - we were told.

They drove us out to the yard naked. From under the hot water in the cold evening! I was amazed: how is it possible that I should not have gotten pneumonia yet? Probably in the camp every person becomes tenfold stronger and more resilient.

It was already late in the evening. A breeze blew and penetrated with frost in the body, in the bones, the first night

Auschwitz opened its gate for us, behind which uncertainty and hope awaited us.

**

Around twelve o'clock at night: it's time to run.

Faster! Faster! - Call some supervisors - run snow ler, you will go to — sleep faster! Run!

Ran for a few minutes and then arrived in the corridor of a block. The block elder was waiting for us there. A young Pole. A sympathetic, energetic face. Open clear eyes. A kind smile around the lips. He gave us a speech. And we listened to her. Despite the superhuman fatigue that dominated us. We always hear what is pleasant to hear.

The block elder said: -

Comrades! You are in Auschwitz. in the box. A Lanny The path of suffering is waiting for you. Danger, suffering, fear at every step. But - do not lose your courage. You have already overcome the biggest danger: the selection. Courage is now gathering strength. We — will all still be privileged to see the sun of freedom. Therefore confidence! Confidence, confidence and a thousand times confidence! Exorcise joy from you and you exorcise death. Hell doesn't last forever... and now - a request to you. A request that is actually a piece of advice: Let a spirit of friendship and sociability reign between you. We are all brothers. Over our heads - the same fate. The same smoke. Therefore: help each other and — vice versa! This is the only way to survive the Koshi Mar. Good. Enough talking. You are tired. Listen, you are in block 17. I am responsible for the arrangement here. Anyone can come to me and tell, if someone does something bad to him. That's all. Now go to sleep. Two men in a bed. A good night! Not

The first human words in an inhuman world. I will remember them.

We ran into the dormitory, jumped on the wooden beds and soon we too fell into a heavy, deep sleep.

When we were woken up in the morning, we were entitled to a proper relationship from the oldest. This was the order of sympathetic block elders: since we are still green, we must slowly, step by step adapt to the black reality chain, not all at once!

We went to the washroom to wash up, then they gave us new clothes. Later Black Cafe, instead of breakfast. Around ten o'clock we had to leave the block. Go out into the yard. You have to wash, make the block clean.

The sun was shining outside. The mood - a better one. Wasn't as tired as yesterday. The effect of a deep sleep. Acquaintances met. They talked. About everything, about everyone. But not about our loved ones whose figures floated before our eyes.

Some kind of unspoken agreement was made between us: not to mention those who were scattered by the wind.

There was chatter about the war, about the Russian offensive. The general opinion: the war will soon end. The spring sun regained its warmth. It was a pleasure to sit on the ground, just like that, without employment, without worries (without worries...).

Around twelve o'clock they brought us soup. Each bay comes with a bowl of thick soup. Even though I felt like my stomach was tearing apart, I couldn't turn to her. The

Former Mfunk has not yet surrendered. The father also ate my portion:

Must gather strength, my son!

In the afternoon we went to sleep on the ground, in the shade of the block. The Black S. s. The officer of the mud barracks in Birkenau, it seems, lied: Auschwitz is indeed a resort... At around four o'clock we were lined up, three old heftlings brought a table and medical insTrumpets. Everyone had to roll up his left sleeve before he approached the table: Numbers! The three heftlings held needles in their hands, dipped them in black ink and put numbers on our left hand.

My number: A-7713.

Completed! From now on I have no name. The name was the last bridge between past and present life. Now the A bridge has also been destroyed. I am a number. According to the number I will get food, clothes, according to the number I will be forced to go to work, according to the number I will acquire the right to live. In the evening: an appeal. The task forces have returned from their workplaces. Near the gate, the camp orchestra played military marches. Apple. Tens of thousands of Heftlings lined up, blockwise. s. s. Men counted, checked, God forbid, that no one was missing.

Then - after the end of the appeal - the blocks gathered together and Heftlingen started looking for acquaintances and asking about life in Auschwitz.

The days have been normalized. In the morning: cafe. Twelve o'clock: soup. (By the way: on the third day I already ate all the soup with appetite!). Six o'clock: Appel. Then: bread with allowance. No. A clock: sleep.

Gray, dull days. Long, sleepless, forgetful nights.

We have already been in Auschwitz for a week, when an extraordinary case occurred. It happened during the appeal. We stood in line for our block. The S. s. Man had already counted us and then we waited for the bell to ring so that we could go get the evening bread.

Suddenly, we hear someone else asking:

Who among you is Weasel of Sighet? Weasel of Sighet? —

The one who inquired about us was a short man with glasses, a wrinkled old face. My father replies:

- I'm Weasel, from Siget.

The lower man is silenced. He looks at his father and a spark of sorrow melts in his eyes:

You don't recognize me... You don't know me... I am your relative. Rock! — Already forgotten? Rock! Rock of Antwerp! Rizal's husband! Your wife was Raizel's aunt... she used to write to us often... wonderful letters!

My father did not remember, because he was always more involved in community affairs than in family matters. I remember: a cousin, her name was Deborah, once came to visit us in Sighet, lived with us. Ate — at the table together with the whole family. She had already been at home for two weeks, when the father first noticed her: "Who is the beautiful girl at the table?" - he asked my mother.

No, my father could not remember standing. I did remember. I could shake before she went to Belgium. She was a beautiful, slim woman. Stein said:

I was deported in 1942. Straight from Antwerp. Now I heard that — they brought Jews from your neighborhood, I thought to myself: I will try to find you. Maybe you will know me

Tell me something about Rizelen, about my two boys, who stayed in Antwerp...

I didn't know anything about them. Since 1940, the mother has not received a single letter from Rizelen. Nevertheless - I decided to lie and I am not at all sorry for what I lied about at the time:

- Don't worry too much, I asked the relative. My mother received letters from Antwerp. Rachel is healthy. The children also...

Stein wept for joy. He still wanted to stay with us, chat, satiate himself with my good news, but - ah. s. Man approached. Stone had to run. He said that he would visit us again tomorrow and disappeared.

How small, how crowded the concentrated world is!

The appeal ended. The bell announced that the ranks may break up. We went to get evening bread. To- Lage: Morgarine. I was hungry. The entire portion was eaten immediately on the spot. My father said:

It's not all at once. Tomorrow is also a day... —

And seeing that his advice came too late, since there was no trace of Avanti bread left, he put his own portion in his pocket:

I'm not hungry... —

He held her for me.

* * *

We stayed in Auschwitz for about three weeks. We didn't have gori and didn't have to do anything. turned around idly. Not working. A lot of sleep, in the afternoon and at night. For physical reasons (a weakened body requires more sleep) and psychological reasons (trying to escape from reality).

We ate little. Talked - a lot. Silence - even more. The only concern: getting out of transport. Stay as long as possible in Auschwitz. Had a bitter experience with transit ports. The word itself struck fear into us. The bridge between the home and the camp was expressed in one single word: transport. That's why we complained in Hoh. in existing. In the static hour. Afraid of changes for novelty.

We didn't know where the shipments were going. Maybe brighter days were waiting for them? Possible. But not important. It didn't happen to us. We are here, let's stay here. For - only at the last moment. When there will be no choice anymore. Auschwitz did not seem to be the worst camp in those days.

Getting out of transport was easy. It's enough to not announce yourself as a professional. Ordinary workers were left at the end. Neither I, nor the father were professionals. We stayed until the end.

At the beginning of the third week, our sympathetic block elder was removed from his post. To be humane to the subjects...

We - the rest of our transport - were transferred to a new block: 17 a. Here the block eltsi ter was a villain and his helpers worse villains.

The paradise era has ended. In the new block, people began to think: maybe it would be better to leave on a transport?

Stein, the relative from Antwerp, used to visit us and sometimes also bring half a portion of bread:

- This is for you, Eliezer!

He used to bring me the bread not because I am his relative, but because I brought him good news. Always, when he used to come, tears flowed from his tired eyes. He was the first man I saw cry in the camp. I never appeared to cry. The tears were frozen, drops of ice.

Stein used to warn my father:

- Take care of your son. He is weak, thin, emaciated. Beware of both selections. Eat! No matter what and when! My father is eating! Many days are not weak!

And he himself was so thin, so emaciated... - The only thing that keeps me alive, he used to say, Is the idea that Reizel lives, that the children live. When not them — Would I not stand it! Once he came with a happy face:

He informed us that a shipment of Jews had arrived from Antwerp. — I have to meet with acquaintances from there tomorrow. Probably Will they give me fresh news about the home... Then he left and we didn't see him again, disappeared became

I remembered my lie, the Antwerp Jews who had just arrived and I understood. Stein couldn't stand it. The truth killed him.

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Stone was the only new color in our English geek life. When he disappeared, the old fast days returned. From time to time we used to gather in the block, as a couple

Praying and singing Hasidic songs, or chants: Yosele Rosenblatt Kvartin, Kusevitsky. Often we even used to pray in public. Akiba Drumer - a Viznetzer Hasid, a cigar shopkeeper, who always kept his head high in the heavens - used to break hearts with his soft, silky voice and melancholic style of prayer.

Pious Jews used to talk about God, about his ways, about transgressions of the Jewish people and about redemption.

I stopped praying. Stopped turning to God. I was angry with him. Angry and angry.

I still thought Yeshiva Bhohrish: either God is not worthy of us praying to him, or he stopped his ears to our prayers.

I have become a heretic. I still believed in God's existence, but precisely because of this I doubted his absolute justice.

Akiba Drummer used to say:

This is a temptation. God tests us. He wants to see if we will — overcome the evil inclination, the devil. Don't be discouraged. One must have confidence. Don't forget: God punishes only those whom He loves. And if he punishes us so severely, it is a sign, That he loves us to the fullest...

Hersh Genad - a Huster Jew, half a Kabbalist used to talk about the sins of Christ.

They didn't believe in their own words. Just talking.

Once upon a time, a thought revolted, threw off the chains of hypocrisy and came out into the open:

- Who knows what our loved ones are doing now... the mother sisters, Zfurhle, the little ones... The

At such a moment we did thought acrobatics; Everyone was looking for a better word of comfort, a more optimistic hypothesis. Me

We didn't really believe in our own words, but we thought: Maybe that person will believe? And if that person believes - a sign that it's not completely out of the question, it really shouldn't be as dark as it seems to us...

- The mother is still a young woman, once the father tried to comfort himself. She is probably in a labor camp. And Zpurhle? She is already a big, mature girl: also in a camp...

And speaking like this - smoothly into the world - a prayer arose in the heart (to God, to fate or even to the devil himself):

- I wish... I wish our assumptions had a basis... It was so easy to believe, to have confidence. So it really did

No one uttered a bad word. His right to hope was preserved. We played a game. wearing a mask of quiet calmness on his face. People really knew that it was just a game, that it was all a cowardly lie, that everyone's heart was torn to pieces, but no one dared to say it publicly.

The principle was: everyone can do what he wants with his own concerns, everyone is his own boss. Will he, he hopes; He doesn't want to - he doesn't. But - no one has the right to destroy that hope. The own maybe? Not at all.

And so empty days and hard nights faded away. And I myself did not know what I was afraid of: for the days or for the nights.

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Everyone has their turn. How long can you pull the rope without it breaking? How long can it be turned out of transport?

All the professionals have already been dispatched. We are left with about a hundred ordinary workers.

- Today you go on a transport! The block writer informed us.

At ten o'clock in the morning we were distributed the daily bread portion. Soon we will leave Auschwitz. In about an hour. We are already standing in front of the block. in rows of five. We are waiting only for S. SI guards, who have to accompany us. Where? Where do you conduct this transport?

Rumors: No builder. A labor camp. in the outer region. What kind of camp? a good one? a heavier one? According to the rumors it is quite a good camp. But can one believe everything that is said? People say so many things here... Do you have a choice? Let's hope that everything is true. a dozen s. s. Men arrived and surrounded us.

It's called marching. Soon we are outside the camp. At the gate - work makes you free!" - ten officers counted us ten times. Now , we are in the free field. In the sky - white, cloudy clouds. A burning sun.

It's almost slow. The guards are in no hurry. That's good too. You pass through a small town. A lot of Germans on the streets. They look at us. In their eyes - contempt. They regard us without interest, without mercy, without astonishment. They don't ask who we are, what we are, where we come from, where we are going. They know everything. They are used to such processions. Do they live near Auschwitz...

Sometimes you meet young Germans. Our guards are harassing them. The successful ones laugh. Soon you will flirt with the truth. Flirt, love game, love. Everything as usual, everything as in a normal world. They laugh, have fun, think about love and we walk in the shadow of death. Somehow it doesn't believe itself. Somehow it is not real all this! Somehow it is impossible that in our crazy era

— When man has fallen so deeply, should men find themselves? - Who think about feelings, about the desire of the body, about women's laughter.

Among the residents we meet, there is not a single person who would throw us a word or a piece of bread. We - we don't exist. We are moving shadows. Shadows on a sunny day.

We are lucky. The Germans accompany our guards for a while Way. Therefore, they are not in a hurry to arrive, the s. s. Men. It's a pity to leave so quickly pure, Aryan daughters!

After four hours of walking, we arrived at the new camp.

The rumors were confirmed this time: Buna.

We are in Buna. In our work camp. Here we will They are faced with the alternative: work or go down the chimney. We will stay here until the end. until the end of the war. One hopes so.

The iron gate closed behind us; We arrived at our new home.

Chapter Three

Days of Finn

The camp looked like another plague: empty. Only a couple of elegantly dressed heftlings strolled from one block to the other.

Needless to say, first of all we were taken to the bathroom. The old camp tradition. You don't get into hell without baptism either.

The camp elder visited us in the bathroom. A tall, firmly built man, a giant, with broad shoulders, a wide mouth, a healthy chest and gray, curly hair. The first impression: a good man. A mischievous smile lit up in his blue gray eyes from time to time. A man with such clear eyes can't be bad, I thought.

A couple of children were found in our transport. Ten-year-old, twelve-year-old children. The camp elder took an interest in them. Spelled and named they bring something to eat.

Well - you say it yourself: we could have fallen into a much worse camp.

After the bath we were given clean clothes and then we were led to two cells. We will live there until the end

Divide us into work teams. Then we will move into a block.

There was a terrible fever in our cell number one. Even breathing was almost impossible. There was no talk of trying to sleep. How will I endure this? I asked myself.

But after sunset it got a little cooler outside and also in the cell. In the meantime, the work teams have returned from work. Apple. Looking for acquaintances. I catch conversations here and there. Exactly like in Auschwitz. You still wonder which commando is good, which is bad, which block is worth getting into and so on and so forth.

Old chieftains said:

Buna is quite a good camp. Not like Birkenau. The — work is really hard, but you can endure it. The main thing: don't fall into a construction commando...

Immediately something can be done against such an eventuality.

No one else decides about our fate, but we ourselves.

⁂

The children among us were the subject of grace at the oldest.

He was a strange type, the cell elder. A German. A murderous face with thick, plump lips and wolf's paws. His whole being was reminiscent of a wolf, and especially when you saw him walking around in the cell. He became abnormally fat from camp food. Hardly what he touched. He was not a positively bad character. But if someone upset him, he literally broke his bones.

He loved children.

Immediately after our arrival, he brought them bread, soup and margarine.

I wondered: how does it happen? Such a human relation to children in a concentration camp?

At that time, I still did not know about shameful child trafficking, about the horrible homosexuality that flourishes in every camp and also in Buna.

I found out about this only later.

The cell elder informed us:

- You stay with me for three days. Quarantine. Then you go Out to work. Tomorrow - medical examination. One of his helpers, an old child with murderous eyes and a sadistically splattered face - approaches me:

- Do you want to join a good team?

- Yes, I answer him, but with one condition: together with the father...

In order, - says the maker, - I can relieve it. For nothing: your shoes. — Get other...

I refused.

I brought the shoes from home. The only thing I have left from the past. A sad memory. However, there is a memory. The shoes are in my eyes a kind of spring with memories.

Get something else: a portion of bread with a piece of margarine on — top, it's a little help.

He really liked the shoes.

But I kept to myself. By my shoes.

And to this day, I don't know if I acted well.

The shoes were taken from me later anyway!

Losing a good team for nothing, a portion of bread with margarine on top!

* *

Medical examination. Under the open sky. in the afternoon hours.

Three doctors are sitting on a bench and we go to them in order.

a comedy.

The doctor, for whom I stood, does not treat me at all. Just asked a question:

Are you well? —

That's all. Who will dare to say that one is sick? Buna is too close to Auschwitz and to Birkenau...

This is why the dentist is more aware of his mission. He opens his mouth wide open. He is not looking for bad teeth. He is looking for something else: gold, golden crowns, bald teeth. Someone who has gold in his mouth must write down his number. I had a golden crown.

The first three days passed quickly.

On the fourth day in the morning, while we were standing in front of cell number one, a couple of capos appeared and each of them chose for himself the ones he liked.

We had the pleasure of a young capo. Maybe 18 years old.

You... you... you... - pointed his finger at a ten man. You all come — with me.

All ten own. Good. All the time spent together, we will stay together.

Praise be to God for this.

The capo goes ahead. We follow him. Stopped at the entrance of the first barracks, near the camp gate. The orchestra block. The capo - his name: Idec - ordered us to enter. algae

My thoughts: What kind of relationship do we have with music?

The orchestra is still playing. A military march. Always this

Same. Dozens of task forces march out through the gate. According to the rhythm. Capos crew: Left! Links! Left, two, three, four! Left!" S.S. officers hold pen and paper in hand. They count, write down how many Heftlings each commando leads out. The orchestra continues to play. Until the end. Until the last commando has left the camp. And all the same march. It irritates the nerves. They almost burst. In between we don't know which commando we belong to.

Finally!

The last commando disappeared on the other side of the

too — gate. The conductor stopped conducting. The orchestra is playing. Idek, the capo breaks down:

- Entry

People line up five in a row, along with the musicians. We are going out. Leave the camp. Without music. According to the rhythm Fundesti about. The march still rings in the ears, still rushes the blood.

Links! Shout Idek, left! Left, two, three, four! Links! —

Well - that side of the gate. Now you can start a conversation. The musicians are almost all Jews. Yuliek, a Polish guy with glasses and a cynical smile on his pale face; Louis, a Dutch boy: a famous violinist. He always cries because they don't let him play Betty Haven. Jews don't play German music; That's how Himmler castled. Hants, a Berlin boy with a brilliant sense of humor. And Others.

The front worker is an intelligent Pole. A Warsaw student: Franek.

Juliek says:

- We work in an electricity magazine. Not far from camp. The work is not too difficult. Not too dangerous. Only - idek.

The capo sometimes goes crazy and then it is dangerous to be near him.

Hants smiles at me:

- You're lucky, little one, you fell into a good commando... The journey took ten minutes. Here, the electricity magazine. A German civil servant (in camp language: a master) comes towards us. He gives us as much attention as a merchant gives a shipment of old rags. He considers us understandably whether we are strong enough to work, whether we are not the same pressure as lazy idlers and then he conducts a conversation with the boss about the division of labor.

Our fellow musicians were right: an easy job. Sit on the floor of a magazine and count screws, electric bulbs and other small instruments.

The capo explains the importance of the work and says that if someone tries to avoid work, he will show him what he knows.

The musician friends calm me down:

-Don't be afraid, little one, he just says so. He must say so. The master is standing here. Idek is dangerous only when a murderous frenzy commands him... don't be afraid, little one.

Fear? I stopped being afraid a long time ago. What can happen that hasn't already happened?

We went into Elektra Magazine. Many civilian Polish workers. Some French women. They wave to the musicians. Probably old acquaintances.

Franek, the driver puts me in a corner and tells me to count screws:

- You will work here, he says, don't worry. Don't chase yourself. Just be careful: An S. s. Man should not pack you! understood?

reply. - But Mr. Foreman... — Understood, I —

I want to be near father!

Franek thought for a while, then answered:

in order. Your father will also work here. next to you —

I thought of him, Franken.

My father is happy. He says:

- We are lucky. If we don't have another job, we will survive the war.

Akiba Drummer works not far from us. He whispers a prayer. A chapter of Psalms. An extraneous laughter spreads on his high, longing forehead.

Two more boys were assigned to our group: Yassi and Tibi. Two brothers. from Ungvar (Czechoslovakia). Yassi is the elder. They know: they are orphans. The parents died. Right at the very first selection. in Birkenau. They care for each other in heart and soul. Each wants to give the other his bowl of juice, his portion of bread. An absolute devotion.

We became fast friends with them.

In the home they belonged to a Zionist youth organization. Learned Hebrew songs.

— We used to sing pianissima songs about the silence of Jordan and the — majesty

Tableness of Jerusalem.

We often talked about the Land of Israel. Their parents also didn't have the courage to liquidate everything and leave it. You could also buy certificates in Hungary.

We really decided that if we want to experience the Bay joy, we will not wait a day and heyda! With the first ship to Haifa!

Akiba Drumer found a verse in the Bible, which according to his geometry, we will be privileged to experience the redemption in the next few weeks.

- But who still believes in geometry? Who still believes in the Torah? And in truth of the Torah? Who still has the strength to believe in what should not be?

⁂

Monotonous days.

We got used to the new way of life.

We left the cell and went to live in the musician's block: number 36. Here we got a nice blanket, a bowl and a bit of soap. The oldest block was a German Jew. It's a pleasure to have a Jew as ruler over you!

His name was Alphonse. A small, emaciated young man with an astonishingly old face. He was loved in the block. He cared for his block, as for his own colleagues. At every opportunity, he used to organize "a pot of soup for the young, the weak and just like that for all those who dreamed more about a bowl of soup than about freedom."

Every morning we used to get up around five o'clock and wait until all the commandos had marched out. Then we also used to go to work.

A dull grayness, an empty boredom clouded our days and also our thoughts.

Once, returning from work, I was called to the blocky writer:

7713 Are you a--

Yes. —

Yes, I am. A-7713. Not Eliezer Wiesel, but A-7713. A number. A number has become the content of my ego." Someone called me by name - I did not answer, not knowing that he meant me. I only thought that a distant, foreign voice was speaking to me from the depths of generations. My name became an anachronism, a contradiction.

To me alone. Only the number spoke to my consciousness. I would even jump up from sleep if my number was called. There were times when I forgot my name at all. Forget how hot I am.

The block writer says, - immediately after the — ,7713-א —
Avanti bread you must go to the dentist. Absolutely!
What does he want from me? - I ask, the teeth don't work for me —
...וויי
I don't ask questions, the blog writer answers, but him, the — doctor...
What can he want from me, the dentist? The old fear of the unknown awakens in me deeply.
Immediately after the evening bread, I went to K. b. (initials: sick building: hospital). A line of about twenty Heftlings were waiting in front of the door.
What are you saying here? I ask them. —
They called us, their answer sounds simple. —
But soon we found out: I'm pulling gold teeth! That's why our numbers were written down during the medical examination...

There is no remedy against this? No. Probably an order from the camp commandant. Can't go? A stupid advice. Hiding? where? You have to go. It was called!
Now, I'm really already inside.
The dentist is a Czech Jew, with a death mask on his withered face. When he talks, you can see his rotten and crooked teeth. I sat down on the operating chair. He wanted to go to work.

What are you going to do, Mr. Doctor? I ask him humbly. Remove your golden — crown, he replies almost immediately —
Valid.

I have an idea:
- You have to do it today, Mr. Doctor? Maybe you know it Postpone for a few days? I have a fever right now...
He thinks, takes my pulse... I said.
Good, little one. Come when you feel better! But don't wait for — me to let you call!
Won a couple of days. All profit.
A week later I came to him again with the old excuse: high fever. He liked the fact that I came alone, almost voluntarily, and he continued to agree to wait for Abisele. I played the same game three times. The fourth

Sometimes I don't need an excuse anymore.
His office was closed for several days.
And he, the Czech dentist, was sitting in the bunker. The hanging was waiting for him. It turned out: he traded - on his own account - with the gold teeth of the Heftlings.

Death penalty!
I didn't feel any pity for him. Have mercy on him, when I am not able to have mercy on myself?
Opposite: I was happy. Glad I saved the golden crown. Maybe she will come in handy later... What can we know? For gold you buy bread and - life! Later I did lose it, the golden crown... and

for nothing. But - about that in another chapter

⁂

Days passed by. Days. Boring, without light, without change, without color, without interest. One day followed another, one day followed

One after the other and we found ourselves in a vicious circle. Umi was able to get away from him.

The disease of indifference to everyone took root in the heart.

Nothing interested me. Nothing but the sloppy bowl of soup or the small, shriveled portion of bread. Bread, bread - that's what life has been reduced to. to life hour. And we dug our black nails into the existence of this hour, into the pleasure of the passing moment. We went to work very early, hard before sunrise. In Elektra Magazine, no new events took place, no new workers arrived, today was always the same as yesterday.

Lucky - lucky... - that Idek, the young capo, used to have sadistic fits of madness... So around, thanks to them, we felt the shape of the times. And also its content. Her weight.

Idek...

Thanks to him, I met a strange French woman in a magazine.

She was a beautiful, young woman. I often used to work next to her. Sad, black eyes looked out of her sad face. Rarely did we have a chance to say a word to each other. She didn't know German, only French. I did not understand French again. We used to work together, except to change looks from time to time and that was all.

But I don't know why, I had the absurd and unfounded impression that she, the French woman, was an Anoush, a Jewish girl who managed to pass herself off as a Christian and that's why she's not in prison, but simply on forced labor. There came a day when Idek went crazy and to my

Unfortunately, I stood the closest to him. Am I really the chosen sacrifice of his. He threw up

he beat me with his fists until I was covered in blood from

Not me, — head to toe. And the fact that I was silent and had no strength to scream - further fueled his sadistic anger, which he unleashed on me.

Then he calmed down and sent me back to work, immediately nothing would happen, immediately we would both participate in the same game and my role was just as important as his.

I dragged myself back to my work place and thought that the whole sky had collapsed on me.

Suddenly I felt that someone was near me and was trying to wipe the blood from my wounded forehead: she! The fraternity workers! She smiled at me with her eternal sad smile, handed me a piece of bread and she looked directly into my eyes so that I could see, so that I could feel that she was with me, that she felt what I was feeling...

I noticed that she wanted to say something, but - was afraid. For several seconds, she fought an internal battle with herself: to speak or not to speak. Then she probably made a decision... She caressed my forehead very tenderly and started talking to Moore - in almost good German:

Bite your lips, brother... don't cry. Stop, keep the rage in you. On — later. A day will come when you will be able to show him the world. But - he is still not there, the day. In the meantime - kiss your lips and wait...

Her words - and the fact that she speaks and understands German - completely surprised me and had a wonderful effect on me.

After a while she asked me:

Do you still feel pain? —

I shook my head yes. Yes, my whole body is through

Out pain. from head to toe. She caressed my hand, my forehead and a strange dream appeared on her gloriously beautiful dark face. And here I must open a parenthesis: later, many years later, I once traveled in the Paris metro. I read a newspaper. Across from me sat a beautiful, dark-skinned woman with unusually sad eyes. I knew: I had seen those eyes somewhere. Such eyes cannot be forgotten. They have so much grief in them that it is also poured into you... Where did I see them? Then I remembered: Buna! She is this, the French from Elektra Magazine! She didn't recognize me. Clearly: she could not recognize me. changed in between. Undergrown. The child became a man. The Heftling became a civilian. But she, she hardly — changed. Especially - her eyes: the same as there, in Buna.

You don't recognize me madam! I asked her. No, my dear sir, —

- she answered. —

So I will try to remind you. In 1944 you were — in Germany. in Buna. true?

Yes. —

- You worked at Elektra Magazine...

agree —

Her star narrowed:

... —

I let her thoughts concentrate.

Wait, my dear sir... wait a little... I remember... you —

remember, madam? Idek, the capo... the Jewish boy... his bloody — body... and you, your words: bite your lips!"

Yes, now she remembered everything.

Neither she nor I went to our meetings. We left the subway together and decided to go drink black

Cafe. We spent the whole evening, stirring up dusty pages from a common memory book, reviving figures, pictures, situations - which we both have not forgotten. Hard to part, I could no longer hold back and asked her:

- Anna (that's her name), allow me to put you a Question.

- I know what you want to ask, Eliezer.

what? I asked in astonishment. —

Am I Jewish... —

Happened! —

- Yes, I am a Jewish child. Even from pious parents. During the occupation I worried about Aryan papers. Thanks to them, I came to Germany as a civilian forced laborer. Instead of being sent to the inbox. No one at the magazine knew that I spoke German. It would arouse suspicion. How does a German get a pure French shot? Only Jewish children also master the German language. And when I spoke to you then - it was really careless on my part. But - I couldn't not talk to you at that moment. And - I trusted you. I knew: you will not betray me. There was no mistake...

Well, let's close our parenthesis and return to the capo, to Idec, the sadist who loved to be reflected in his bloody hands.

Once upon a time such a thing happened. We had a hard day. Need to charge a wagon with diesel engines. German masters stood by us the whole time and checked the work. This — brought out Idec from the vessels. He released his heart and anger to us. This time the closest victim to him is Hat Was - my father.

You old fool! - he shouted at him, and hit him with an — iron rod over his face, over his shoulders. My old father collapsed in two, like an old tree struck by thunder.

I watched this scene and - did not react. I was silent. And even thought to move away from the place, so that the capo wouldn't attack me too. Nachmer: If I was angry, if I was upset at this moment, it was not at the capo, at Ideken, but at the father, angry because he did not know how to protect himself from Ideken's hysterical attack.

Here's what the camp made of an individual, of a faithful son, of an sensitive child. I was more angry with the father than with the murderer who beat him.

Akiba Drumer, the long-time follower, blamed me later. He said:

- Eliezer, I don't understand you! How could you watch Ideken beat your own father and not throw yourself on the hood?! You don't need to kill him or yourself... I mean! I beat your father and you - shut up!

The last bit of blood from the veins ran to the head. I I was ashamed. Akiba Drumer is right, I thought. What has become of me?

In my heart, I made a decision: if such a scene is repeated, I will no longer stand idly by. But I knew that in practice I would not be able to carry out the decision. The father probably understood what was going on in me. He wiped the string of blood that was snaking from his mouth and said to me:

Don't cause yourself any pain. It doesn't hurt at all... His face — was swollen. And I pretended not to see.

⁂

Franek, the Warsaw student, the front worker suddenly saw the gold tooth in my mouth. He wanted to get to him.

- Boy, give me your tooth, he applied to me on a beautiful day.

I replied that it was impossible for her to fulfill his wish. I can't eat without this tooth. Boy, do you have anything to eat? —

I found another answer. The tooth is registered at the dentist. If I give it to him as a gift, it could cost me and him, Franken, quite dearly.

Boy, - replies the truck worker, you are living in a mistake. If — you don't give me the tooth, it could cost you dearly!

Funny: the sympathetic, the intelligent Frank has revealed his true face. The desire for gold is stronger than education, than — conviction, than principles. It is like that everywhere. Especially in camp.

I replied to Frank that I had to ask my father for advice.

Ask your father, boy, said Frank in his soft voice. Bring an — answer tomorrow! Morning!

When I told my father about the new decree, he turned pale, like the white sky above our heads.

No, my child, he said, we shouldn't do it. And if he tries to take — revenge on us? —

- He won't dare, my child.
Franek did dare.
He changed radically. His humanity has left him. Even his gestures and his eyes got a hard expression.

He was smart, Frank. He knew my weak point. Knew where to knock so I could feel it.

My father never did any military service. That's why it was difficult for him to walk in and out of the camp. Didn't my father get beaten once by Ideken or by an S. s. Man for not being DC disciplined.

We both - the father and I - suffered a lot from it. Every day the same incidents were repeated. in the morning and in the evening.

I once decided to give the father lessons. Teach him to walk in stride. How to change the step, how to march with the same rhythm.

We used to do our exercises in front of the block. I
Go. — — — shouted: Left! Left!" And he, the father used to
— Heftlingen often gathered around us and laughed:

Look! Hey, friend, look! The little officer learns to walk the old — man! Hey, little one, general one, how many portions do you get from old people for that?

My heart was bleeding.

Recently, the father made progress. His walk was already to the end. But Frank appeared on our horizon. And he liked my golden tooth.

A chapter of snails opened.

Every day, when marching out and marching in, he beat his father:

Can't you still walk in the span, you old man? —
- It's not my fault, - the father always stammered
And his face was contorted with pain and contempt.
It lasted for about two weeks. We couldn't stand it anymore. You have to surrender. Don't resist the temptation.

When I announced to Franken that he said the tooth was his - he didn't think of me, but burst into wild laughter:

- I knew, I knew, boy, that you would come to your senses. Better sooner than later. But now, because you made me wait so long, it will cost you a portion of bread. A portion of bread for an acquaintance of mine. He is a dentist. A famous dentist from Warsaw. He will take your tooth out. The prize: a portion of bread!

At first I didn't understand what he meant:
What?! I dared myself with words. - You really want to. —
That I should give the dentist my bread, so that you can get him a tooth?

Franek laughed - happy and happy with his jealousy
Infernal invasion:
- What would you like? Shall I break your tooth with a stick or with my fist?
His argument was convincing.
That same evening, the Warsaw dentist tore off the gold crown. The operation" took place in the throne room. He, the doctor, worked with a rusty spoon. It didn't go so easily. It hurt. But in the end he got his portion of bread and broke the golden tooth.

The march - troubles really stopped. Frank became human again. From time to time he even threw me a spoonful of soup.

However - we did not have much use for teeth. Two weeks after our capitulation to the Franks, an order arrived that all Poles must be transferred to another camp. The front is too close... Idek, Franek - both left us. I didn't long for more shelter. Neither does Frank. I only longed for my tooth.

- We could get bread and soup for him, - I sadly regretted my weakness regarding Franken. Mila. Too late to regret.

An unjustified sacrifice.

⁂

Before Idek said goodbye to us, he left me the last bit of money. He gave me a lesson on how to spank me. I received 25 lashes from him. Why? Because I have Dare to look. Look at him, on the hood. It happened on a Sunday afternoon. Our crew was allowed to stay in camp all day. But Ideken went literally into life, we should march out. Go to work. Why this fleeting enthusiasm for work?

Two hours later I understood the reason. Idec came to a rendezvous. To a rendezvous with a girl. Right after we entered Electra Magazine He handed us over to Franex and said: Do what you want. But do something. Work! When the devil won't take you... —

—

and disappeared into the mysterious labyrinth of the magazine. We didn't have any precise and important work. Have We turned around in the magazine and searched, wondering, maybe a civilian worker had left a piece of cheese, a piece of bread.

By chance I went to a side room. I heard that something is being whispered there. The Nigir pushed me to see what was happening there. And I saw. Everything. A straw bed. Idek and a young Polish girl, whose long, black hair was melted, wasted. She was lying on the bed - half naked. Idek - too. He was also lying half naked. Every day I used to see these women giving white bread and sausages. Now I understood why Ideken was so eager to work. I don't remember what Sara Tayvel talked me into. I only remember that I was crying out loud. Somehow it seemed funny to me that Idek should drag hundreds of people to work, so that he could satisfy his evil desire, so that he could lie with a Polish woman on a bed of straw...

Idec heard my laugh. He saw me. He jumped up from begging. The girl tried to cover her bare chest. My legs wanted to escape. Idek was more alert. He grabbed me by the collar. I knew: now I am lost.

Idek leaned towards my face and said in a cold, subdued voice:

Wait a little, little one... you'll soon see that you shouldn't get — up from work and wander around in German magazines... You will soon convince yourself that it is dangerous to be curious...

Then he sent me back to my workplace. A fear has attacked me. The heart foretold dark prophecies. And no lie was told.

Half an hour before the work had to stop, the capo called together the
entire commando. Apple. No one understood the reason for it. Only
me. I understood.
The capo gave a short speech:
- Here in Kacet there is a law: a simple Heftling does not have
the right to interfere in his business. One should not be curious. One of you doesn't have it
— either: bad standing. If I bother to give him this to understand...

A piece of ice ran through my back bone.
!7713 to me ־א —
Lord of the world, what will happen to me now? All my members
asked me. I stepped out of the queue and
Went to him, to hide.
- Bring a small box, the capo ordered.
Someone did his bidding.
- Bend over the box! Idex rang again
Order.
I obeyed. Mechanically. bent over. deeply bent.
Idek then took out a leather tip rod and started hitting my bent body,
with a sadistic smile on his lips, with a murderous expression on his small
and red face:
- One... two... - he counted!
Between one and two he waited a bit. Wish I had time to feel each
blow separately. But only the first five or six blows hurt. I hardly
felt the rest. There is a limit to the flexibility of the body. I was on the other
side of the border.

ten... eleven... —
Idex's voice sounded almost normal. She walked towards me
from a distance, as if from behind a stone wall.
twenty three... —

Two more clicks! I unconsciously comforted myself
Encouraged.
- Twenty-four, twenty-five!
Completed. I fell off a cliff. lose the ba-
Consciousness. Idek brought water and poured it on my face.
Idec ordered. - Get up!
I wanted to get up. I was afraid not to obey. This would
mean new hits. I so wanted to follow him at that moment...
but - the body was stronger than
my will He did not obey.
Get up - ordered Idek Fundosny. —
I tried to answer that I couldn't move a thing, but no words came to my
lips.
Without a choice, Idek called two heftlings. They have me
erected and maintained.
Look at me! Idex's voice slapped me in the face. —
I looked at him.
In the heart - a thought: a pity that the father is here with me! The trouble
probably hurt him more than me
Alone!
Listen, son of a pig! Idek cold-bloodedly warned me. —
- You only got this because of your girlfriend. Five times as
much awaits you, if you dare to tell someone what you do
Did you see! understood?
Yes. I understood. I shook my head yes. Shaken not once, not
five times, but dozens of times. His head suddenly decided that
from now on he wouldn't stop listening to yes, yes, yes.

Then I felt the urge to vomit. To break out everything that I
had on my stomach and on my... heart.

⁂

On a beautiful Sunday day, the sky sent us a gift: American bombers threw fire and flames at Buna.

Half of our commando was at work. The others - in block. We, the lucky ones, slept late and business satisfaction from every minute that passed after five o'clock, without having to get out of bed.

My father was outside at work.

Around ten o'clock the sirens began to blow with their constant jackal cry. Air alarm!

Block elders ran around the camp and drove everyone into the blocks. There is such a law in Katset: during an air-raid alarm, all the prisoners must be in the blocks. The s. SI men, the guards, - they run fast in the cellars and in the protection pits.

The guards for the — houses during the alarm are easy to escape leaving the watchtowers, the electric current is turned off by the breakers - said the S. s. Right to shoot any heftling that is not in the block.

It took a few minutes until the camp looked like an evacuated ship: ruined, empty and empty. Not a soul in the alleys. Not far from the kitchen were two abandoned, half-full cauldrons of hot soup. There was no attempt to catch them in a block or bring them back to the kitchen. Two pots of soup. If not for the alarm, hundreds of starving villagers would have fought around them to fight for a spoonful of soup...

Now they stood, both cauldrons, as if silent, in the middle of the camp. Hundreds of eyes were on them. Eyes of desire, of hunger, of prayer. Here they stand, the kettles of soup, like this

Close, so close and no one watches them, no one, no housekeeper, no kitchen worker, no one and yet who will dare to leave the block during the alarm?

Nobody. The fear overcame the hunger. A, sorry: someone dared. The wooden door of block 37 opened, slowly, slowly, almost imperceptibly, and a deformed man began to crawl, like a worm, back to the boilers.

With their — eyes, hundreds, thousands of eyes followed with disgust and a little jealousy - after every movement of heroism or suicide. Will he succeed?

Yes. He succeeded. Now he is already at the first boiler.

Everyone's heart was filled with jealousy. Why does it matter to him and not me? The fear, the commonality, the sympathy for his act have disappeared. Only the selfish jealousy remained.

In between, the latter was lying - half-sitting - next to the kettle and could not lift even a finger from too much agitation to scoop a spoonful of soup from the kettle. Long. For long fearful minutes he lay half-sitting next to the kettle and looked into the soup, in his dream. And then he suddenly cried out, like a wild starving animal and pushed his head into the kettle: he wanted to eat with his mouth! With the whole face! At least eat to your heart's content for once, from a big, huge pot and not from his usual dirty bowl!

Fluzim cut through the silence, the tension with a shot. Our hero fell out of the cauldron. His head was smeared with soup. Now he was completely lying on the ground and his body was writhing, like a snake that had just lost its head.

In the audience, the jealousy disappeared.

Don't be jealous of whom or what. And deep in their hearts almost everyone justified the fate of our hero. It came to him. Why exactly did he want to prove his bravery? Are we less hungry than him? Why did he want to arouse jealousy in our heart?

Yummm! Wow! Bummmmm! —

The whole world suddenly started shaking, shaking. She would be hired right away.

Someone shouted. — Buna is being bombed! —

The heart really gives a thrill - it means: the father is now there, at work! the whole body. Until now, I still haven't had — But nevertheless, a joy fills the privilege of seeing how the German building in general and the death building in particular goes up in Pla- Man... We have heard, heard a lot about German defeats on the different fronts; But all these were rumours. We haven't seen any actual dicks yet. And this is literally! Bombs! Where is the airwave? Easy? Where is the fleet? Where is that? Air armor around the Third Reich? The only means of protection of the German army in Buna was to spread an artificial smoke over the camp and the factory. The Germans are masters at making smoke. The bombing lasted more than an hour. I wish she would last ten times ten hours...

The barrack shook like a tree in the wind. We too were in danger. Bombs could easily have strayed into the camp. And then hundreds of victims would have fallen in a matter of seconds, due to the large number of souls who lived in such a crowd. But it didn't happen to us. Not afraid of death. Not for such a death. Did every bomb fill us with indescribable excitement of joy.

Then there was a deep emptiness. Guns are anti became silent. The last echo of the buzz of the bombardier was carried away by the wind. Only the horizon blackened in smoke. A few minutes later, sirens sounded. This time the end of the air alarm.

We, the Heftlingen, were interested in only one thing: to know the extent, the magnitude of the destruction in Buna. People ran out of the blocks, took in the fire full of air, the smoky pictures and the eyes drank hope with full cups.

One bomb fell, an AI error in the very middle of the camp. Grod at the appeals court. Luckily she didn't explode. Heftlings took her outside the camp and risked their lives in the process.

The camp commandant then arranged an inspection in the camp. With a lowered nose, he crossed Centi Rale Allee, accompanied by camp elders and camp capo. The bombs also left a deep impression on him, the camp commandant. Next to the kitchen was still lying, indifferent to everyone and his fate, the shot Heftling, his face smeared with soup.

The pots of soup were taken back into the kitchen. The SS appeared on the watch towers. Nikes with their machine guns. And everything was getting ready to start again. The contract has ended. You can continue playing. Immediately, the Bami administration did not change anything, neither in the warring world nor in our camp.

Nevertheless, the bombing did somehow change: the expression of the S. s. Guardians. An expression of panic and panic will-

Hair did not disappear from their faces, even after the end of Lofty Alarm.

And this expression of theirs told us clearly: Germany — lost the war. Little important is the fact from an objective and absolute point of view - whether or not we will be privileged to experience it. The main thing: the defeat hangs over the German country, like the sword of fate.

An hour passed and the commandos marched into the camp. Many wounded Heftlingen. About ten dead. my father? Saved Bens. Indeed, the joy is whole, perfect. My father said:

- A considerable number of buildings were destroyed in Buna. You have been wiped from the earth. But — our electronic magazine says...

Mila. Now American pilots will know the way. Another two or three such flights and Buna will be erased from the German war-industrial map. Let them come! What faster! In the afternoon, all the commandos received an order to go out to work. Clean up ruins. Although we didn't really like to work, we gladly went to work this time. It means: see German ruins! Maybe a couple of German victims! And those mourners! And orphans! This must be seen! Our guards, the s. s. Men, were walking on this side and their brutal faces turned out to be finci terror, terrified.

⁂

The bombing also left us sad Results.

pendants

It happened about a week after Happy Sunday. We came back from work. As usual: tired, dirty and physically broken. The camp had a somewhat different appearance. A night crow spread its wings on him. In the middle of the camp, in the very center of the appeal site, we were greeted by a black hanging. No one dared to walk in her shadow.

Old chieftains among them: Yuliek - have confirmed: - Today someone will be hanged...

Why? We didn't know that yet. It will be realized. Later. During the... — ceremony.

I'm going to wash. As usual. The fellow musicians are quickly going to bring their instruments. The chapel master is already waiting for them. Here is the orchestra ready to attack the eternal march. The first commandos march in. Sharp orders reach us from the gate: Left! Left!" or get off! Head up!". The orchestra is playing.

In the block we are informed: this evening the soup will be distributed later. Only after the appeal. Alfons, the young-old block elder is more serious today, older than ever.

Apple. Each block is numbered separately. Once, twice, three times. This apple is different from all the other apples I've seen, somehow it pulls slower than usual. Somehow the orders sound strange, more fearful than ever. Somehow the air is heavier, more charged than ever.

Mi ten... off! - The command of the camp elders is heard. All ten — thousand Heftlings take their hats off their heads together, in the same ser kunde.

The camp elder gives the report. Two endless minutes of silence.

Mi-ten off! —

Together, at the same time — ten thousand Heftlings put their on their heads without a second. — hats back

Now something has to happen...

The camp gate opens. a group of s. Men appear and circle around all the assembled Heftlings. On every three steps - a guard. The s. s. Men on the watch towers are more vigilant than usual. Their machine gun is located on the appeal site. They are afraid of riots, he whispers in my ear. Juliek. —

Yuliek has already attended hanging ceremonies. They no longer make any lasting impression on him. According to him, there is such a tradition in every camp: S. s. Men are obliged to besiege the heftlings during a hanging ceremony.

Two armed S.S. Nikes went in the direction of the bunker and soon returned, accompanied by convicts. It was a Jewish guy from Warsaw. 3 years in the box. A tall, well-built fellow, who compared to us, he was a giant.

Now he stands with his back to the gallows. With the face - to be the honorable judge, to the camp leader. He is pale. Not from fear, but from excitement. His hands - tickled. His eyes? A strange, thick, almost unreal spark permeated them. Perhaps it was a touch of irony: so many. s. Guards because of him, because of one single unarmed, weak Jew... And perhaps it was a spark of request to all of us, to those who will perhaps survive the hell, not to forget, not to forget, not the hangings and not the daily sufferings, not to forgive and not to forget to demand and demand revenge... The camp leader read the death sentence:

- In the name of Himmler... the Heftling No.... stole... during the air-raid alarm... according to the law, paragraph... is the Heftling

No... sentenced to death! Let this be a lesson and an example for all the Heftlings...

Nobody moves.

Am — I - who has not yet seen any hanging in front of my eyes shocked. Funny: the tens of thousands of people who died every day in Birkenau and Auschwitz - they left me almost indifferent. But - here, this Heftling the only one who goes to death shook me to the deepest depths of the soul.

Older subjects reacted in a strange way. Yuliek asked a question:

When will the ceremony end? I'm hungry!... He can feel hunger at such a — moment! - I got used to it hundred.

And I didn't know that people get used to hangings easily. At the behest of the camp leader, the camp capo joined the convict and led him to the gallows. Two helpers, simple heftlings, helped him. For two liters of soup. That was the prize.

The camp capo wanted to touch the convict's eyes, but the Jewish boy from Warsaw refused this kindness. He wants to see! He has no fear!

The pendant hesitated for a short while, then he threw the pettily on the victim's neck and prepared to give a sign to his helpers to grab the stool from under the convict's feet.

- Long live the freedom! I curse Germany! I curse! I love it!

The guy, the Jewish guy from Warsaw didn't finish his curse.

The talin have done their job.

sharp as a flash, then the command of camp sounded.

Eldest:

Mi-ten app! —

Ten thousand comrades paid their respects to the hanged man.

Mi-ten off! —

Already? Did the show end? No. Only now is the worst coming.

The whole camp had to march past the gallows and take a good look at the hanged man, whose red tongue was frighteningly large and turned his whole face into a tragic, terrifying grimace.

Kapos and block elders forced everyone to look directly into the eyes of the hanged man.

Only then, after this procession, were we allowed to go back to the block and get the evening bread.

And to my great astonishment, the soup worked wonderfully. smell

The first time I saw a hanging ceremony in my life, the first time I saw a hanging in my life and yet today she is so thin... I, soup and regretted what ten minutes later, calmly ate my

Later I generally got used to the spectacle of hangings. There was no hangover week. And they convinced me that I became Juliek. The same approach had to the horror ceremonies. I don't regret the victims, but the fact that we love them too much, we will get the evening bread later.

Most of the condemned went to the gallows, without fear, without fear. Often their courage surpassed even the s. s. Nikes alone.

There were those who shouted in the face of the tormentors, the murderers, warning them that the day of revenge is approaching; Others

They always found a moment to encourage those who were still condemned to life in the camp.

I don't remember a single case of a convict who would have cried when he felt the cruel fat on his neck. All approached death and his servants with contempt.

On the other hand, I remember a tragic case, when all the camp workers who had to participate in the hanging ceremony, burst into silent tears. I will tell him to you.

But first I must dedicate a few words to the upper capo of the 52nd cable commando. He was a Dutchman. A boy - a giant. Two meters high and maybe more. Healthy, slim, firmly built. Seven hundred chieftains worked in his commando. Everyone loved him dearly, because - he was a good person, the Dutch upper capo. Always a smile and an expression of sincerity brightened his ruddy face. Never did a Heftling get a slap from him; Hefty Ling had never heard a loud, angry word from him.

He was really loved by the whole camp.

And he, the upper capo, had a peeple, a little boy as a servant. The boy was twelve years old. He had black eyes and a noble face, a face that created a disharmony with the camp environment.

There were many children with us in Buna. or people", as they were called. They used to serve kapos or block elders and receive from them practical lessons about homosexuality.

In the camp, people hated them, the people. Because they were cruel, worse than adult cruel people. No one could be more cruel than such a child. I myself saw a Munkacher boy, not yet Bar Mitzvah, who beat

His father, because he, the father, did not ask for his good, the boy's, bed.

The father wept silently. The child shouted to him: Why are you crying? If you don't stop crying right away, I won't — bring you any more bread! Did you understand?

And I knew another boy - ten years old - who used to beat old heftlings until blood flooded their faces. And he beat them just like that, in order to prove his power, his power, in order to prove to the older generation that a revolution has taken place in recent years, a revolution that gives children the power and right to rule over their parents.

Yes, the camp raised its children in brutal, unhuman spirit and turned them into murderers.

But the little servant from the Dutch Upper Capo is an exception. He was loved, a good, pure childlike heart beat in him. And he had eyes that resembled the eyes of a sad angel.

Once the police discovered a weapon in the block of... Upper Kapo.

Weapons in stock! This means: an underground movement!

We, Heftlingen, knew about this side the first day of our arrival in the camp. Not once did we see strange things and transactions taking place between Heftlingen and Polish workers at the workplaces. The Poles used to hand over to their friends, the Heftlingen, wrapped packages, which would quickly disappear in a pot of soup, for example.

But the Gestapo only found out about it now. How so?

Quite simply: the upper kapos commando spread an omni-terrestrial cable network around the Buna factory. On a beautiful day, the cable center jumped and for three whole days the huge factory had to stand, without work, without electricity.

The Stashpo, which came straight down from Auschwitz, investigated here and there and soon came to the conclusion that it was a sabotage operation. The Feds led to the Dutch Upper Capo.

Sthaponices immediately made an examination in his block and discovered a few weapons there.

The upper capo was immediately arrested and for several weeks he was tortured in order to get the names of his friends, the remaining members of the underground movement.

Nothing helped.

The upper capo smiled and remained silent.

Then he was transferred to Auschwitz and his then His tracks disappeared, no one knows what happened to him there.

But his little servant remained in the camp, in the bunker. He was also arrested. He was also tortured. He too was silent.

The Gestapo claimed: the small servant took part in the sabotage action, belonged to the underground movement. He used to bring the weapons into the camp.

We, Heftlingen, knew: it is true. The man of Ui Ber Kapo actually belonged to the underground movement.

For two or three weeks, he remained in the bunker, where all the Feiy Nikungs methods were tested on his noble, slender body.

He didn't say a word. If he lost his courage, his superhuman power of resistance, tens of thousands of the Heftlings would be arrested, tortured and later hanged.

But he persevered. until the end. Having no choice, the S. s. sentenced him to

Death. Him and two other inmates, with whom weapons were also found.

Once we came back from work, - it was on a dark summer day and saw that three hangings were waiting for us. Three pendants whose shadow filled our thoughts. Three pendants.

For whom? As usual: we didn't know that yet. Only after the appeal, we will know, then when we will be forced to look them straight in the face.

Apple. Bewafnte s. s. Men. The guards on the watch towers stand ready to shoot. The traditional ceremony. Three convicts are brought. Two grown boys and between them - the little kid.

Dis. s. seemed to be more cautious and more restless than ever. They probably felt it themselves: hanging a child is no small thing - even in the camp! This can lead to revolt! This can also cause ten thousand Heftlings to immediately throw down the chains, the fear of their hands! That's why machine guns were lurking on us, darker than ever, from all sides.

Here is the camp leader. He reads out the threefold death sentence.

All eyes are on the little boy. He stood pale and almost calm in the shadow of the gallows. An infinite sadness was reflected in his dark angelic eyes.

This time the camp capo refused to serve as a pendant. Didn't want to hang a child.

Alternatively have three s. s. Men must represent him.

The three convicts went up to the gallows together. together gave the neck the open fetlie.

They now stood facing us.

Long live the freedom! Both adults shouted. —

The little one was silent.

Where is God? Someone asked, someone behind me. An unbearable silence — dominated the entire camp. In the west, the passing sun lit up the sky.

At a sign from the camp leader, the three benches were suddenly torn from under the feet of the convicts.

- Mi-zen app! - did, this time with a choked voice cried the camp elder.

For many Heftlings, for a great many, tears appeared in their eyes.

Mi-ten off! —

Then the march began. The camp must see the fate of Germany's enemies.

Both adults were already dead. The fatley killed them on the spot, on the spot. Immediately the soul lifted up. Their outstretched tongues were red, like fire.

Only the little one, the Jewish boy with the dreamy, wandering eyes, was still alive. His body weighed too little. Too easy. Petlia didn't catch it."

The slow death of the little servant lasted 35 minutes. And we saw him, swaying, clinging to the rope with his blue-red tongue sticking out, with a prayer on his white, gray-white lips, a prayer to God, to the Angel of Death, that he should have mercy on him, that he should take his soul, free it from the bonds of death, from the torment of the grave. When we saw him like this, the little hanged, many did not want to, could not refrain from crying.

Where is God? asked the same man behind me —
Second time.
Something in me wanted to answer him:
God? where is he Here he is hanging, on this rope... This —
evening, the soup did not smell.
We hid her in the morning.

Chapter Four

The day of judgment

...and also the summer is almost over.
The flames of the sun became weaker, paler, and bolder. In the
evening even a cool breeze used to reach us. A sign the winter
stands and waits at the gate.
Older residents say:
Bad. Winter is an angel of death for camp people. Wait a little —
and you will see... We, we old people, know what the Winnie the
Pooh brings with him!
Mila. Winter - should be winter. They had no fear.
If we were told that the whole world was going to be destroyed and
we along with it - we wouldn't have any fear either.
We smiled half-foolishly and half-mystically - and answered:

- Summer is equal to winter and winter is not different from summer.
Death does not distinguish between seasons, he works for a whole year.

Pious Jews, on this occasion, remembered that we
Stand close to the terrible days.
We must prepare for the Day of Judgment! Did they wake up everyone —
they met at work or on the block,

get ready? to what? We are ready.
This time the roles will change. This time we will not stand as accused before the absolute judge. This time we will be the judge and God himself, the accused.

- We must prepare for the judgment day! - Have pious Jews us Warned.

We are ready. Everything is prepared. Powerful documents in our indictment. Vivid and cruel documents. Here - comments that need to clarify the foundations of divine justice in heaven and on earth.
judgment day? Let him come. We are waiting for him.

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New Year's Eve.
the last day of the year of curses. A supernatural fear hung over
suddenly burst from the — the camp. The nerves like strings: they
unexpressed power that lies within them, from all the songs that
It — they would like to sing and can't, because singing is not on the soul.

The last day of the year.
Again, the word "the last" sounds strange. An extraordinary secret lies in this concept, a mysterious charm, a cursed dibuk. The last day... a boundary between past and future. A bridge between what was" and what will be", a hyphen between a question mark and an exclamation mark.

The last day of the year.
Am the sun. A Gingoldene Shaye. The sun sets in the west and it's as if it took our hope with it forever. I wish she would bear with her rays also our love. Bread is distributed in the blocks in the evening. Hot, thick soup.

Although the stomach is empty. Although the eyes are swollen from it, no one touches her. Although she is hot and delicious. Waiting. Although the hunger ends. You want to wait. Wait until after praying. First pray and only then try a holiday feast As it should be. A spark of the past has in the blue sky and in our representation No heart ignited.

The electric lamps cast their light on the circuit breakers. The shadows in the camp are getting bigger, longer, livelier.

On the appeal court. Apple? Not an official, forced appeal. Another appeal is now taking place there. Thousands of Jews. Their faces bear witness to the holiness of the night; And on their attachment to the A, holiness. In the eyes - a self-deprecating confidence. An absurd faith.

The night is approaching with silent steps. She would also like to join the group. The apple site is becoming fuller, more compact from minute to minute.

I felt: here, here, between the electric switches and in the shadow of armed murderers, the man received a new power. He is able to dominate the time, the area, they dominate, find in the past, create in the present a flash of the past. What are you, God, the Lord of Hosts, what are you against this, a crowd that has come to shout to you its belief, its anger, its protest, its request? What is your greatness about their weakness?

This is how man became stronger than his god, I thought.

Ten thousand people participated in huge numbers. Blocky elders, capos and just prominent lagernikes. All, or almost all of them, came to combine their prayer with the Yaush prayer of Camp Menin.

Pious Jews who, because of their Jewishness, lost the right to be called people Pious Jews are crying out loud. - Bless the blessed Lord! exclaims the cantor with an insignificant human voice. It seemed that the wind was calling for the pillar and not a human being.

Blessed be God's name!

People pray, the ten-thousand-headed man, hearing the A, words, bowed down, immediately a tall giant tree that bends its branches, feeling the stormy wind.

People pray. To God they pray. Here, in camp. between electrical switches. Some span of crematoria. To God they send prayers, blessings. To the god who makes daily incense offerings of blood.

God. The Eternal Merciful. Once he demanded a sheep sacrifice. Today, his demands have increased. He wants people. People and not sheep! And if he wants, he gets. He takes himself!

And people pray to him.
Blessed be God's name!

Why? Revolts a voice in the deepest depths of my heart. Why? Why does it happen to him? Why should we bless his name? For the children that I saw being burned in funeral pyres? For the six crematoria that function non-stop, non-stop, day and night, night and day, in Birkenau? Why bless him?

The cantor prays. The crowd prays with. Jews, pious, cry. Clay pen. It turned out that soon their souls will die together". People with their tears. And from their dry lips words, once saints appeared. Words that tried to reach the sky, split, break through the barriers of heaven, the walls of silence, which God himself erected between himself and his creatures, through:

Break them and throw yourself on the throne of honor and shake it, shaking it, rousing it from its indifference.

Words, words, words.

Tears, tears, tears.

A rain of tears soaked the blood-soaked ground of the apple plot in Buna.

Sings the — cantor - a visionary Hasid, a butcher or a heartbreaking Dane:

- God's heart and soul!

He stood still at every word. Couldn't put together the words of a hymn. The song was like a bone in his throat and stuck to him.

— And I - the former Yeshiva boy, the Bar Mitzvah boy - thought to myself: Yes, man is stronger than his creator than his God. When you, God, great and cruel God, changed yourself into Adam and Eve, you immediately drove them out of Paradise; When you were disappointed in Noah's generation, you soon brought a flood on him; When you didn't like Sodom, you burned it in the fire. Are people disappointed in you and what are they doing? They pray to you! They praise your name!

Did the cantor, the Vizhnetser Chassid everything belong to God!

Sung, heartbreaking.

True. That's how people learned from childhood. That's how I learned in the classroom, that's how I learned in the yeshiva, that's what rabbis and hasidim, books and interpreters told me. True, everything belongs to him, to God. Everything. The whole world. The whole of humanity. All fellas as nations and all individuals as individuals. And in his world, in God's world, such acts of murder take place! And he is silent?! And God's silence means that he agrees! How can we agree with him?

Images from the past appear before my eyes: once, on Rosh Hashanah, I felt differently, behaved differently. Weak and poor. I knew: I have committed many crimes during the past year. And with every transgression, I grieved the Lord of the world. With every unfulfilled mitzvah, I prolonged the exile of the Shekinah, intensified the sorrow of the Messiah. I really wept, wept with bitter tears, while Rabbi Barsher, late, shook his head and with his warm voice threw to his hundreds of Hasidic the Psalm of David, God's heart and soul!"...

sometime? Once I believed in the faith of Solomon, that God sees everything and judges everything, that God does not forget, that God listens to true prayers.

sometime? Once I believed, with perfect faith, that the fate of the world, of the Jewish people, of the redemption depended on my gesture, on my prayer?

No more the once".

Today? Today no tears come to my eyes. The spring dried up. Today I no longer feel weak. I feel strong. I feel the heroism, the strength of those who have been wronged. I feel strong. Strong as a prosecutor against a murderer. Because in between, my eyes opened. And they saw, and they showed me a new world, a new face of the world. Meanwhile, I was disappointed in the person. And in the human being disappointed. And in God. In God of judgment, in God of mercy.

I came to the appeal site. But I did not pray with Menin. I stood there as an observer and tried to do what must be done on Rosh Hashanah: take stock of the soul and the A, the soul of the soul revealed to me the flaws in my business.

Thicker worldview, reveals to me the existence of eternal riddle of human and divine cruelty.

The prayer ended with Kaddish. As usual. For Jews, everything ends with Kaddish. But this time, everyone said Kaddish, after parents, after children, after sisters and after themselves. For a certain time, the crowd remained on the appeal site and did not know what to do with themselves. One fell into an abyss of confidence and did not want to leave it, one stood still, without a reason, without a goal. Only later, when it was getting close to the time to go to sleep, they took funani

reach, tear to pieces. The first stars appeared in the dark blue sky

Stars that have always touched our imagination. — A good year! I should

— have wished you a good year!

Jews wished each other. Wishing so - and remembering that the same Winnie Chevanie was said the year before, tears welled up in her eyes, but she tried not to cry. All the Jews tried to smile.

From the smiles came grimaces, tragic grimaces Which had everything in them. Sad joy and despair Confidence.

I ran to find the father. I was afraid of the moment when I would - also have to wish him a good year and faith in the future. I knew: I won't be able to contain myself, I will cry and I didn't want to cry, no way.

He stood next to the block. Locked in a wooden sloop. bent. Immediately the suffering of ten generations would lie on his shoulders. His eyes were looking somewhere in the unreal distance, which he himself was probably able to see.

I went to him. took his right hand and kissed it. Involuntarily, a tear wet his hand. Whose tear was that? Mine? His? Maybe both. I didn't tell him anything. He me - neither. Only our hands spoke to each other.

We have never understood each other like that, one the other, as in that moment. Although - or because - we did not use words. Our silence was deeper, truer than all the lofty phrases that people have invented, except for the six days of Genesis combined.

For a long time we stood like this, in the shadow of the new year and kept silent.

Then, in that moment, he was everything to me. A father, a mother, a friend - a god - myself.

Fluzim - the bell. You have to go back to the block to sleep. Are we back? From far, far away. From past to present.

I raised my gaze. Wanted to see him, the father. Wanted to paint a smile on his gray old, aged face. Not shown. He didn't smile. Like fate itself, he stood over me, bent over. Without power, but ready to protect me from enemies, with his blood, with his life.

...and now, writing these lines, I still see him standing in the shadow of the block, leaning in a wooden sloop, bent over me. I still see his eyes that threw flames of rage at the surrounding world, flames of rage that will, through me, forever remind the world, humanity, that because of its silence, because of its criminal indifference, Germany was turned into an altar for the Jewish people...

It was the eve of Rosh Hashanah 5555, in an evening when the sky split open - along with my heart.

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Yom Kippur

Do you have to fast on Yom Kippur?

A tough question.

Fasting means danger to souls. Here people fast for a whole year, here is a whole year of Yom Kippur. Every day is a judgment day here. Here we stand every day on the balance of blind fate, which must condemn us to life or death.

Hear a problem: should one fast on Yom Kippur!

Most of the Jews in the camp answered: Yes, we must fast. Ai, danger of souls? That's why you need to fast. Precisely - because it is a danger to souls. We must show the Lord of the world that even here, in this closed world, where there is no room for him, not for him and not for man, even here we do his will.

Stupid Jews!

They wanted to soften God's heart!

I didn't fit. First of all, I wanted to be a father. He forbade me to fast. Second, I could not fast for spiritual reasons.

I thought: Fasting means making peace with God, with His Torah, with His truth, with His ways and I am obviously not at peace, not with Him and certainly not with His ways. On the contrary: revolt against him, that's what I want! And my food on Yom Kippur will be a gesture of protest against the way he deals with the world.

I did eat my poor piece of bread. But in my heart, deep in my heart, I felt a terrible emptiness, a heavy emptiness.

A trifle? I have lost my God!

⁂

When the religious doomsday is over, there is a different one, a more real and a more serious one: a selection.

Yes, in honor of Sukkot, the S. s. We prepared a gift.

We came back from work. A strange mood prevailed in the camp. A mood of unrest. This time the appeal lasted less than usual. The food was distributed in a hurry.

At that time I was not together with my father in the same block. The reason: I was assigned to another commando. to a construction job. 12 hours a day I dragged 50 kilo stones on my shoulders.

Since the father remained in the musician commando and while working in Elektra Magazine, he remained in his apartment block number 36.

But I was transferred to block 57, at the top of which stood a good German Jew, slim, low built and with a sharp nose and with an even sharper look.

Well, that Sukkot evening there was a nervousness in the camp. Our block elder ordered not to leave the block after the evening meal.

And a terrible word was carried from mouth to mouth, from the heart to heart:

Selection!

We knew the meaning of this word. From time to time comes a high S. s. Officer down and checks the prisoners. He finds a weak one among them - on the camp tongue: a Muslim he writes down his number and that person is a ready candidate for the chimney.

Martin, the eldest, distributed the soup and this time did not hit the heads of the heftlings with the big iron spoon.

After the attack, people gathered in groups among the beds and tried their chances of survival. Older residents say:

- You are lucky. You're lucky you came late. And not two years ago. Today is a paradise compared to what was here then. Then Buna was a hell. Which was not. Don't cover either. Food - much less than today. At night, people used to sleep almost naked and without a cover. And it was 30 degree frost outside and inside the blocks. Hundreds of people died every day. Dropped like flies in camp and at work. The work was difficult, a thousand times more difficult than today's. The capos received orders to kill a certain number of heftlings every day. And reasons and means did not fail. Apart from that, a selection was held every week. A strict and merciless selection... Yes, you're in luck! You're lucky you came so late!

We are very lucky!

There was silence in the block. The heart was beating fast, devilishly fast.

- Enough! Tell no more! - I asked them, the older residents, you will tell tomorrow, the day after tomorrow.

They laughed and their laughter woke me up.

- Good, little one. Are you afraid? Mila. We were also afraid. Then there was why to be afraid. Today? Today you are lucky. Thank you for coming late.

Older Jews and especially those who have not yet passed through

Having made no selection, they stood aside and remained silent. Immediately they were careful not to utter a word, in order not to remind fate that they were still alive. Better he should forget them. Pious Jews resorted to the old means: they pray, they say psalms. The eyes become sunken, deeper, darker than waves on a stormy sea.

In about an hour...

In about an hour, our fate will be completely sealed. Life or death. Death or subsequent fine. Here, the new doomsday of the twentieth century. Only this time we are without a military justice. The only military justice here can be your healthy body, muscles or fate, the accident. I didn't trust any of them.

I remembered without father... what will happen to him? became an old man. That's how it gets old. Weak, thin, tired, exhausted. Hardly what he sees where he goes. What will happen to him?

The oldest block of ours is upset. Since 1933 he is in different concentration camps. He knows: tonight he will be forced to release a certain number of people from his block to the king. And that hurts him. He wanted to save us all, save us from the selection. How so?

Around nine o'clock in the evening he appears among us. His face is darker, his eyes tired, his mouth more bitter, than ever. He begged us.

-Attention! Silence. —

Listen carefully to my words! —

His voice trembled. The first time I hear his voice tremble. She always sounds so sure of herself, so sure of her own power.

The - - — in a few minutes the selection will take place, explains the block elder, who tries to wrap his words in a matter-of-fact, day-to-day tone. - You need to undress yourself. Then enter the writing room one by one. At the door will stand the S. s. Doctors. I want to hope that you will all pass the exam safely. But for God's sake, you must increase your chances for life! Before you go into the writing room, do gymnastics, so that the — face gets color; Second, don't walk slowly, just run! Run, immediately the devil would find himself behind you! Run! Don't look back! Run, run away! He interrupted his speech for a while. Then:

- And most importantly: don't be afraid!

Why did he need to add those last few words? Didn't he know that the best way to instill fear in someone is to tell him not to be afraid?

I started to undress. The clothes left on the bed. Tonight there is no danger of them being stolen. Even thieves have other concerns at such an hour.

Suddenly there was complete silence in the block. You could literally hear the turmoil that was bubbling in their hearts.

Tibi and Yassi, the two brothers who moved with me to the new commando and to the new block, are came up to me and said:

— Let's stand and walk together!

Yossi mutters something with his lips. Turns out, he's praying. Funny: I never knew that Yossi was a pious man. Somehow piety did not stick to his image, to his character and he himself always considered himself a non-believer. Actually, his current prayer is nothing. For a selection, — pray for yourself. I also wanted to whisper a prayer. And it was necessary to use all my inner powers, in order not to

To allow oneself to be dominated by the weakness of the moment. Tibi was silent. He was terribly pale. The whole block was already bare. During the last day of judgment, people always stand naked in front of the court.

Those who stood close to the window reported The news:

They arrived... arrived... —

They" - three high-ranking SS officers. Among them Dr. Menni Gele, the famous„ Dr. Mengele, who received us during the first selection in Birkenau.

Older residents keep repeating the same phrase

- You are lucky! Came late...

I'm nervous, I'm begging him

- Stop it! Shut up a little! Aren't our nerves? Excited enough?

The door of the writing room opened. The black elder came in and, trying to smile, asked a question:

- Well? Ready?

Yes. We were ready. The s. s. Doctors too. Dr. Mengele has a list in his hand.' The block numbers. He gives a nod to the block's oldest:

Let's start! —

Three words. Just three words. Dozens of lives will be cut short because of these three words. Oh, why is that? Word given to the man?

The selection has begun. First run through the prominent personalities of the block. Housekeepers, servants, capos, fori Workers. They are all healthy. a wonder? What are they missing in the camp? Then the usual heftlings start walking through the door. Dr. Mengele examines them from head to toe. Sometimes he stops one, writes down his name. That one is already a loser. One thought

Burns in the brain: not letting the number of my left hand be written down. Do not let! This would mean: death sentence!

— I'm already standing in front of the door. At the threshold. Only two for me. Tibi and Yassi. They run. One after the other. Almost no distance between them. I prove to see that Mengele did not write down their numbers. Someone pushes me from behind. Run! Courage! I run. I run, not knowing, at the moment, to what and where I am running. Strange questions flash in the mind, running: Am I not too thin too emaciated? I run. Maybe three meters. Maybe not that either. It occurred to me that I have been running like this for years, long years and tens, hundreds of kilometers. Finally! Here I am already standing, exhausted, exhausted, next to Yassi and Tibi. The first question:

- He signed me up?

No. Yassi is calmed down, so he agrees with a smile: - He wouldn't even try to do it. You ran like that Quick...

I laugh. Am happy. He wants to kiss both brothers. In that moment we forgot the whole world. Forget that the selection continues and that dozens of other acquaintances, friends, are currently registering themselves in the Angel of Death's list of — people.

I even forgot without father.

Only later, a few minutes later, when I felt, with my whole body, that I was saved, only then did I remember him. What's up with him?

Tibi and Yassi calm me down. Soon everyone will know everything. Soon. After the selection. Then the stock will be abolished. People will be allowed to leave the blocks. Then everything will be known.

Inside the block are people standing, laughing and crying. it The registered ones cry and the others laugh.

Older residents keep repeating their refrain: You're lucky... —

But now their words no longer brought me out of the vessels. Let them talk. Why not? We were really lucky. Everyone - I. I was lucky.

And he, the father?

The selection officers are gone. The block elder came inside to us and on his face was reflected our tiredness. He said:

- Everything is in the best order. Not worried. Nothing will happen to any of you! None of you...

He still tried to wear the mask of a smile on his face.

Someone, a tall thin Jew, with broken shoulders and swollen legs - asked in the voice of someone who wants to believe in something and can't:

- But... But, Mr. Block Elder! My number was registered!

The block elder stopped smiling. He has become angry, who does not want to believe his lies, who does not allow himself to be comforted by his words:

- Why are you asking questions? - He straightened his long hair - you don't believe me?! I tell you clearly that nothing will happen to you and you want to be voted pessimistic! Only one! I will not tell you a lie! You may, after all, you must believe me!

In between, the camp bell rang and we got permission to go out into the camp. The stock is over. A sign that the selection - too.

A sky of lead hung over the camp. Even the happy residents felt unethical. Tibi and Yassi are eating

Very cold soup. I ate mine before. For the selection.

I run with all my strength to the 36th block, see what is happening with him, with the father. met him on the way. He came to me.

- Boo? How is it with you?

And with you? —

We reassured each other. Breathe easier now. I was happy.

Happy. Happiness is a relative term. Unhappiness too. The greater the misfortune, the smaller the chance that can bring happiness. One is dependent on the other.

We are talking about different issues. It is easier to speak. Drive away death again, defeat it. The father has a gift for me: a half portion of bread. He found in Elektra Magazine a piece of rubber that could be used on rubber columns. He sold it for half a portion of bread.

The bell... I must go to sleep.

The bell!

This was my biggest enemy in camp. He was the Almighty God and ruler. With his consent, according to his will, we got food, went to sleep, washed and worked. In the morning he tore us from the arms of dreams and in the evening - from the arms of friends. Oh, I hated him, the bell!

And, when I used to have the courage and weave an unreal, an untrue dream about freedom, about a free life, I imagined it as a life without a... bell...

He became the symbol of Katzet in my eyes. The
Symbol of my life, of my fate.
I often thought I was losing my mind because of him
the bell. Because of

Good night father, the bell... rang. —

- Good night, my son!

The sky began to clear. Pieces of dirty clouds broke away from him and fled before the light of the stars. An hour ago the sky was lead. Where did the lead come from? Too much to think in order to give an answer: he is by
Me in the heart.

**

A couple of days passed. In the selection we have almost forgotten. He went to work. As usual. Our commando had one of the most difficult jobs: loading heavy stones onto German wagons. After every hour of work, I used to
It means that I will fall into weakness and never rise again.
The rations were leaner than before. But apart from that, everything went on as before. Nothing has changed. Have indeed
A few notes:
- a sign that the block elder did tell the truth:
Nothing will happen to anyone!
A sign... why not? Of course there were among us those whose numbers were noted down by Dr. Mengele. Everyone was sure - and especially themselves - that they were lost. And now - they go to work, like all of us, get bread, soup, etc.
We all...
Only the block elder himself lost his smile, his sad energetic smile, when they tried to remind the SE lesson in his presence.

...ביז

In a beautiful - a beautiful? Morning. M got up
Like every day before sunrise. They washed themselves. Get black coffee. Bread.
As always.

Suddenly, the block elder enters and calls out:

- Calm down! I ask you to be calm for a while! I have a list of numbers... I will read it. All that I will
Call, do not go to work: they remain in camp! And with a soft, even very soft voice he read
A dozen numbers of paper that trembled in his hand. We listened carefully to the numbers. Some faces are turned pale. Suddenly we understood: selection numbers! Our hope was false. Mengele has no luck
Eat. Death really delayed coming to the rendezvous, but - he came.

A cool breeze was blowing. In the east, the sky turned red. A golden posy appeared on the horizon.

The block elder tries to go back into his room. Ten
People surround him. They tear pieces of his costume.

- Help! You promised us golden promises?
Help! You can help us! We want to go to work, we are good
Workers, we can, we want...
What could he do?

He tried to calm them down, explaining that the fact that they were staying in the camp had no meaning, nothing tragic.
doesn't mean...

-You see, I stay in the camp every day - no matter what
Me something?

No one laughed at his joke.

In between, the bell rang:

Entry! —

Soon we will be at work. Today I don't care why the work is so hard. Abbi be far, far from the block, far from the scene, where tragedies are born and lost.

Suddenly I see my father running towards me. Without him I almost forgot. I feel like a riot is coming over me:

what happened —

He can't get a word out of his lips. He is cloudy and broken.

- I am also... I was also... named... stay in Camp!

Instinctively, I knew the continuation of the sentence. Every trouble comes unexpectedly. It seemed to me that someone punched me in the face with a giant fist:

- How did it happen?

Turns out: His number was written down, but he didn't notice it.

- What can be done, father?

He tries to calm me down, he tries to cheer me up. He - me. He says:

It's nothing. It's not certain yet. There are chances to show off. —

There will be a second selection today - a decisive one... I kept silent. Didn't know what to say. Didn't know why to say

The father continues to speak. Now the rhythm of his words became faster. He was afraid that he would not be able to tell me everything he had to say, that soon, soon I would have to march out to work with the rest and - he would be left alone, alone...

- Here, take the knife, he says to me. - I don't need it anymore. It will come in handy. Take the spoon too. Don't sell them. Faster! Take what I give you!

Inheritance!

Tears came to my eyes. Also in his, in his father's. We both look away without a side. I'm trying with all my might to utter a word:

Don't talk like that, father, - I answer him. Father! Don't talk like that! I don't want — to hear such words. Keep the spoon with you and also the knife. You need them just like me. Ibe Rickens, we'll see each other tonight. I am sure of this...

Then he looked at me with his tired, sad eyes which were darker than usual because of the curtain of tears that had fallen on them and said:

- I beg you... take... do what I tell you, my child! You must obey your father!

Our capo shouts out the order to march.

The commando advances to the gate. I bite my lips, so as not to cry. I glance behind me. The father remained locked up in the block. He's still looking after me. Then he runs. He wants to chase me. He probably forgot something he wanted to tell me. Or just like that, wanted to say goodbye to Me. He ran. But we went too fast.

We are already at the gate. A. s. s. Man counts us. Pre-write. The capo's name is Anton the hat. We are already out of camp.

The father stayed inside.

Will I see him again?

During the whole day I walked around like a moon climber.

Tibi and Yassi tried to comfort me. The capo - a Jewish boy from the lodge - too. He assigned me to light work. A special relationship! This hurt me. Because of her, I already felt like an orphan. Have mercy on me! They know why

It happened; They know what is going on in the heart of an orphan and therefore they have compassion...
I thought: even now the father is helping me! Thanks to him I have an easier job!
The hours went on slowly, slowly. I myself did not know what I wanted: the day should pass quickly or not. On the one hand, I was afraid of the evening, of the empty evening, of the safety that he would bring with him, but on the other hand, I wanted to know what happened to him, to the father.

Finally, the sun - which doesn't count on my patience - remembered to go down. Let's go back to camp. The heart beats — with a hammer. The pulse: 140 a minute. The eyes are staring out, they are not listening, they are trying to see what is happening there, there in the camp, the feet are going fast, faster, faster, faster, they want to run...

The cloud of skepticism rises in the heart and asks: why hurry, stupid one? Won't you get the news early enough, the bad news?

Music. The eternal military march. Here is the camp. The gate. s. s. Men count us. We are inside.
I run straight to my father's block.
Are there miracles on earth?
Here he is...
He saved himself. Appeared to convince the s. s. Doctoi Rim, today, during the second selection, that Germany will lose an important worker in him if he is removed from Buna. We kiss each other. I give him back the knife and the spoon. A question still arises in the heart: Are there miracles on earth?

And I answer in a loud voice: *

Yes, father. There are miracles... the —
selection ended with a miracle for us.

* * *

epilogue:
Akiba Drummer has left us. He fell victim to the selection.
Recently he felt sick, tired. He used to walk around with lost eyes and tell everyone about his weakness:

I can't stand it anymore... I can't anymore... Yes, we, my father and I, used to try to encourage him, encourage him by telling him about the hidden son, who has to get up in the morning, but it didn't help. He stuck to his: he can no longer fight, he no longer has the strength, the faith.

He lost his faith, Akiba Dreamer. The faith in oneself and perhaps also - in God. He rarely spoke about it, but sometimes a fearful emptiness was reflected in his dark gaze and the emptiness spoke more than a mere anachronistic phrase. Akiba Drumer was not the only one who lost faith in those days. I knew a rabbi from a small Polish town. It was a small, bent Jew, with sunken cheeks and always quivering lips. An eternal prayer. While working, he used to shake himself and he used to study a page of Talmud with additions. Sometimes he used to call me when Meninha Merib, because there was a lack of a center for Menin. And I went, because unwillingly I respected his iron faith that is in him - without which there is no relationship with

External events.
He once said to me, this rabbi:
God is no longer with us! —

And as soon as he was suddenly startled by his own words, by the cruel truth of his words, he continued in his weak, pale voice:

- I know. You shouldn't talk like that. I know. Man is too small, too insignificant, for him to understand God's ways. But - what can I do? I am not righteous. I am a simple flesh and blood. Divine pain. Physical pain - both make me sad. And in all our sufferings, I see, I am forced to see God's hand, the hand of the Most Merciful. How can I believe, how can someone believe in such a merciful God, in such mercy?

Yes, many people lost their faith in those days. Before them, they have the image of God and together with him the aspiration to be equal to his image. Akiba Drummer. If he had continued to believe in his former God, he would not have been dragged down by the selection. But he was a strange Jew: he could not live without his heaven, without his God. Without faith, he was not able to fight for life. With tears in his eyes, he said goodbye to us.

We did not comfort him. to what? He knew where he was going. Knew what was said on him. Why part with a lie, with a false comfort?

He shook our hands and asked us: Say Kaddish after me...

Just like that, with an almost dry voice, with an almost understandable voice:

- Say Kaddish after me...

I remembered the little Polish rabbi who used to study Talmud while working: No, God is no longer with us. Akiba Drummer drew a dead smile on his long, white face:

- In three days around...

In about three days, we have to say Kaddish after him. I thought: in three days, I will probably see clouds, small, white clouds in the sky. Stir cloudy. Among them, in them, he will be. He - Akiva Dreamer. His soul, his body.

I instinctively closed my eyes. One should not think such thoughts. Such pictures should not be seen. Akiba Drumer still stands before us. He smiles and his smile rushes the blood.

- Don't forget, I'm begging you... in three days!

We promised him that we would remember. Of course they will We remember it. Menin will be made and all his friends will say Kaddish. Although the Kaddish no longer has any sons, no justification. Kaddish will be said for him, for Akiva Drumer and not for God. Akiba Drumer then left in the direction of the hospital, where a small ambulance was waiting for him, which took him

Directly to Birkenau.

He didn't look behind him, Akiba Dreamer. Clear: We have forgotten to fulfill the promise.

Weeks later, we first remembered that no Menin was made and no Kaddish was said after Akiva Drumer, three days after his departure.

Forget.

⁂

Winter heralded its arrival. Days became shorter and nights - harder. The winds in the morning hours cut the body, as if with iron whips. Winter clothes were distributed in the camp. Dark, striped costumes. Thicker shirts. That was all. Here is our defense against

Winter forest from Upper Silesia. Older residents have again Found an opportunity to scare us:

- Well, now you will first experience the taste of Katzet! - they said.

Right away we still haven't felt him enough.

We went to work when it started Days. The work became more difficult, inhuman day by day. The fifty kilo stones we had to drag were cold. It seemed that if you put your hand, the bare one, to them, they will freeze on the spot and stick to them forever. But - this was also endured. The hand was not frozen; She did not cling to the stones.

Once upon a time, during the lunch break, we were allowed to warm ourselves with coal stoves. Then the warmth used to pour into all the organs, into all the veins and it didn't want to go away from there...

November... December...

The first winter days are over. There were few victims. People have learned to be stronger from nature.

We didn't work on New Year's and Christmas. And get a better soup. This was the only time I was happy that Jesus was a founder of a religion.

Little by little, people got used to the winter, and it turned out that if the fire was added, the cold would also be added.

We have discovered new powers in ourselves, a new reservoir of resilience. Who ever imagined that we would be able to endure all this? Thanks to the Germans, we started to know ourselves better. My father said:

We will survive the winter. —

And I answered:

We will survive the war. —

We were both wrong.

⁂

On January 15, my right leg started to swell. Probably from the cold. Terrible pains attacked me. I could not walk counted steps. I went to the hospital. The doctor treated the swollen leg and said: he must be operated on:

If you wait long, - he said, - they will have to cut off your fingers — and then amputate the whole leg!

I still missed that!

Even in normal times I was afraid of operations. for blood For physical pain.

Today, here, in such circumstances!

True, we really had excellent doctors in the camp. The Europe's most famous specialists. However - the means that were placed at their disposal were poor, insignificant.

The Germans were not overly interested in healing Sick subjects.

Just the opposite.

If it were up to me, I would not have agreed to the operation. Better to wait. Better wait until the last moment. But it didn't depend on me. I was not asked anything at all. The doctor decided to operate and end verse. The choice was in his hands and not mine, I really felt a drop of joy in my heart, which he made without me. 4

I entered the hospital. I was assigned a bed with a white mattress. Funny: I had already forgotten that people used to sleep in beds with white people.

It turned out that it is not so bad to be in the hospital. The food was better. White bread. More soup. There was no need to stand outside on appeal. You didn't have to work either. And they could even send out a piece of white bread white bread for the father. Not bad.

—

But the initial mood did not last long. An elderly Jew from Hungary was lying next to me. Dysentery. A man without a face. Skin and bones. Closed eyes. You can't see his face. He is talking to me. Where does he get his strength from? talk?

- Premature is your joy, young man! - He said to me, the faceless Jew. There are selections in the hospital, more often than outside. And here they are stricter, more dangerous. New Germany does not care about sick Jews. Germany is not necessary for me. At the nearest shipment, at the next — selection you will get a new neighbor. Follow me. Follow my advice: leave the hospital for the selection!

His words of fear were etched in his mind. Maybe Pai Ran is right in his assessment? Do I have a choice? - I came here out of necessity, I will leave. It doesn't depend on me.

I was a little angry with my neighbor. Why did he tell me all this? Why destroy my joy?

A fear arose in his heart: he wants to fire me. He wants me to leave the hospital as soon as possible. Not for my sake. for - his. It depends on the mind. There is not much room in the hospital. Few requests. A lot of sick people. If there are new ones, a fresh selection will be made. In order to make space sick —

for others. The system: Hard cases will be sacrificed for easier cases. And the neighbor minor is a difficult case. He wants to drive me away. The old means: fear. He wants to scare me.

These thoughts calmed me down a bit. Nevertheless, the doubt arose in his mind: and maybe he was right? Mila. There is no way out. We have to wait.

The doctor brought me good news: I will be operated on tomorrow.

I knew that an operation meant pain. No anesthesia was available in the camp. No sleeping pills either. Well pain.

—

A double anxiety: maybe I won't be able to endure the physical suffering? And then - maybe a selection will take place right after I get — off the operating table and then I'm lost!

The doctor probably read my thoughts on my face: 1

- No fear, little one, he reassured me.

A, how much warmth I felt for him at that time, for the A, counted words.

In the morning.

At ten o'clock in the morning they brought me into the operating room. My doctor was there. This gave me courage. Father he is here. If he is here, no harm will be done to me. I don't know to this day if the doctor knew how much hope I placed on him at that time... In my eyes, at that moment, he was the savior angel. His word was sacred. His gaze - a sign of heaven.

- It will hurt you a little, he gave me to stand in front of me. But bite your lips, little one. They are stronger than the agony. - I will bother, Doctor, - I answered.

The operation lasted about an hour. For the first half hour, I suffered from the grave. But I didn't cry. I persevered. During the whole time I asked myself: how can I endure it? And asking myself like that, I subconsciously turned into an observer and considered the operation, as soon as they wouldn't cut my leg.

But after half an hour, I lost consciousness. The agony became unbearable. And in order not to scream - that is: in order not to humiliate myself in the eyes of my beloved doctor - I simply and plainly passed out. I suddenly felt as if I was being pulled by natural forces
Down-down, to the ground; And I fell, fell as if from a mountain top; Below, an open abyss awaited me; And falling, I approached him, the abyss, with an unreal speed
קייט...

...When I woke up, when I opened my eyes, I saw only an infinite whiteness that encompassed everything - the entire space, from the sky to the earth: the white lily. The good-natured face of the doctor was bent over towards me:

You had courage, little one, - his voice smiled at me. Bravo! —
were brave and strong. Now - rest assured: nothing will harm — You
you. You will stay here for two weeks. You will relax. You will eat well, rest your bones, your nerves well.

His soft, smiling voice reached me as if through a curtain. I heard the intonation, the inflection of the voice, but not the words, not the body of the speech. The doctor talked a lot to me, about me, but I didn't understand what he was saying. The only phrase that caught his ear was: two weeks to rest... two weeks! The price of blood, of agony!

Maybe everything was worth it? Perhaps it was worthwhile to go through the hell in the operating room, in order to enjoy a two-week rest?

The leg hurt. I felt a heavy paper bunny daze on the open wound. A thought flashed in his mind: Didn't they amputate the lower part of the leg? A cold sweat covered the whole body:

Doctor! - I called. —

He caressed my wet forehead:

What's up, little one? —

I wanted to ask if I would still be able to walk on my right leg, but at the last second I was embarrassed and said something else:

Doctor... I'm thirsty! —

He called me to bring water. Ask him? Afraid of his answer. He smiles. He is getting ready to leave. He must visit the sick. Now...

Doctor... —

What's up, little one? —

- Doctor... Will I still be able to walk on my right leg?

The doctor stopped smiling. A convulsion took over my body. I mean, I didn't make a mistake. Amputate the leg!
— Severed fingers - at best... because otherwise, why did he stop smiling? I became angry with myself for asking the question. Suddenly his smile became more important in my eyes than his own leg. The amputation stopped
— bothering me. But smile... be

Little one, do you trust me? - the doctor asked me — seriously.

- Yes, Doctor. Absolute trust.

If so, you believe what I'm about to tell you: in about — two weeks, you'll be walking around the camp, just like everyone else. Nothing will happen to you. The lower part of the leg was swollen. full of pus. had to be cut. Squeeze out the pus. But - nothing was amputated. I'll tell you one more time: in about two weeks you'll walk around the camp and you'll feel better, like before the operation...

I believed him.

Two weeks?

It didn't last two weeks. It didn't even last two days.

During one day, during one period, many events broke out in the camp. Many unforeseen events. It didn't last two weeks.

28 hours after the operation, I was already outside the hospital and walking around, not walking around, but running around - in Lei Ger. With a badly bandaged leg, with bloodied, bitten lips, but - ran around. And to this day, I don't know where I got the strength to walk around, with a Norvos-operated leg, when the smallest step made me feel pain and tears.

Two weeks in the hospital?

Naive, dear doctor! What made you think that it depends on you, only on you, whether I should stay in the hospital for two days or two weeks?

⁂

How did it happen?

Here's how:

In the morning, one day after the operation, strange rumors spread in the camp: the front is approaching. He is already up

are very close. The Red Army is almost at the gate. Between us and a distance of several hours. A few hours and she will be, or she — You may be in camp.

We were used to such rumors. From time to time a confident prophet would arise and he would flood the hearts with his good, brilliant gospel visions: peace on earth, negotiations with the Red Cross regarding our liberation and so on. Often we even used to believe in all this, because - we wanted to believe. It was like a morphine injection against Josh, an injection that once helped to endure a night's suffocation and a day's maternity. And although we later saw that these tidings came from the wind, disappearing with the wind, people did not come forward with — any complaints about the confidence of the prophets. Simply: they and their prophethood were forgotten. It was easier then to forget. But this time, this time the situation was different. These times we knew, felt, that there is a basis for the rumours. Somehow the s. s. Nikes were more nervous than ever. Something happened. Something has to happen. Camp life took on a different color. A cloud of sadness and expectation hung in the sky.

At night, we used to hear the thunder of cannons, the echo of which filled our hearts with joy and in spite of everything, hope.

Yes. This time we were sure: the rumors were true. The front is very close. The big day is ready and waiting for us to receive it.

tension.

I lay in the hospital and enjoyed a piece of white bread, which my protector, the doctor brought me. In the hospital, too, the mood was high, but -

Nevertheless, people were unethical. An inner voice warned us: redemption is not your redemption yet! Will fate have mercy on us this time? Will we be privileged to see our liberators? Hard, hard questions. The heart was pessimistic. Precisely now, when redemption was so close, when it was in the air, precisely now when the skies used to turn red, at night, from the Russian rockets, one did not want to, could not believe that the nightmare was approaching the end.

My faceless neighbor also didn't miss the opportunity to throw his kind word into the general conversation of the hospital room:

Don't be fooled by false hopes, he argued. Hitler said that before the — clock would strike twelve times - he would kill all the Jews so that they would not hear the last strike of the clock. What makes you happy?

I became angry with my depressed and depressed Neighbor:

What is your business? I shouted to him, why do you sow joy and fear around you? — Why do you want us to believe more in Hitler's words than in the future?

Two closed eyes looked out from under the white linen. The Jew was silent for a while and then, with a sudden tired voice, answered:

- Yes, my child. I believe in Hitler more than anyone. He fulfilled his promises. He fulfilled all the promises he made to the Jewish people. Why don't you believe him?

An ice-cold wind blew in the hall.

Through the windows of the hospital block, the camp appeared before my eyes, with its snow-white blanket.

⁂

The same day, around four o'clock.

As usual, the bell called all block elders to report. But somehow the report lasted longer than before. Something really hangs in the air. Fate is going to take the word. The block elders have returned word, only — from Rapport Dershei Tert. They uttered only one one single word tert:

Evacuation! —

The camp is being evacuated. Empty. The expulsion path has Not finished yet. Redemption is really close, the Russian army is really standing in front of the gate, but that's precisely why Himmler decided to take us away. where? Deep in Germany. In other camps. Is there a shortage of warehouses in Germany?

- When do we leave the camp? - Someone asks the spy Valley doctor.

Tomorrow evening. —

Maybe the Russians will arrive by then? —

Maybe. —

stupid question Short answers. We knew quite well that the Russians would not arrive. That they are not in a hurry to free Kony concentration camps, that they will be in Buna, only after it will be emptied. We knew that we would go, march on, always on our bloody path. Nevertheless, people could not refrain from putting comforting jokes.

In the meantime, the work commandos entered the camp. They also returned earlier than usual. They interrupted

The work. The Germans knew: the work of today will bring benefit to the liberator of tomorrow.

The camp was turned into a hive. In all the blocks, people were gathering, getting ready to enter the road. One single word brought about such a change in the life of the camp. Here is the power of words!

The last commandos entered the camp. They didn't know what was going on, but they felt that something was wrong. The orchestra did not meet them with any music.

I forgot my sore wound. Other concerns. One of the hospital doctors entered the hall and announced:

- The evacuation plan is complete. Tomorrow evening, immediately after nightfall, the camp will march out. Blackwise. The sick may stay in the hospital. They will not be evacuated!

The news was not received with any joy

The sick. Somehow the bride is too beautiful, the sheath too irritating. is it? The Germans will allow, just like that, not me, not you, hundreds of heavy people to escape from their nails? The s. s. Men will allow Jews, even sick Jews, to listen to how the clock will strike twelve times before the Third Reich? No. The phrase sounds too beautiful. Hitler kept his promises. Regarding Jews, he fulfilled his promises. The decision to leave the sick in the hospital sounds suspicious. There are probably plans in place for sick...

All the sick will be shot! - calls out the faceless idiot, my — neighbor.

Many shook their heads. agree Sick people will be shot. This is - logical. This is the logic of cassettes. And who is still such a logical nation as the German!

someone else — - The camp is definitely mentioned by

Sicker. - Immediately after the evacuation, the camp will be blown up!

Once again: many shook their heads. agree This is also in the area of cassette logic. There may be a difference of opinion regarding the manner of our destruction. But not about our death itself. There is no doubt about this. The sick will be brought to Umi. Why not? What will move the Germans not to do it? Why leave witnesses, speaking witnesses?

I was not surprised by the assumptions. As I have established many times: death has lost its terrifying effect for me. I was used to him, to his breath. But something worried me: the possibility of being separated from my father.

And I wanted to fight that possibility. I didn't want to divorce my father. We have been through so much that we must continue to be guided by the same fate. Despite everyone! Despite the — operated leg! People

...Half an hour later, I was already running around the camp and looking for my father, in order to consult with him, what we have to do. The camp was destroyed. The windows of the blocks - frozen. I couldn't pull any shoes up on my right foot. Too swollen, too sore. I walked around with only one shoe. I did not feel any cold, wetness and pain. I will stay in the hospital for two weeks! - That's what Doki Tor promised me.

Ah, naïve doctor!

⁂

What are you doing? —

The father did not answer.

What are you doing, father? —

He was lost in his thoughts. The situation was serious, especially from a psychological point of view. Until now is The — choice was not in our hands. Everything that happened happened without our will, without our initiative. Others have decided about our fate, about our next step. Was it really easier? Feelings of remorse rarely tormented us.

Now, however, the choice is in our possession. Two ways are open to us. We can stay - both in the hospital. I am sick. And he - as a sick person or as my "doctor's help". The doctor would undoubtedly have agreed to help us.

On the other hand, we can both go with the whole camp. Is the leg bleeding? Mila. Not dangerous. Where we are going - there is probably a hospital there too. Will I rest there from the fatigue of the road.

What are you doing, father? —

He was silent, the father. It was hard to decide here or there. Staying in the hospital is exhausting. to an easy solution. From minute to minute, the rumors that the sick are going to be shot are growing louder.

Going with the camp, who knows how far we will go, how far we will arrive, how many victims we will lose on the way. We will go with the camp, father! — That's how I decided.

I knew: the father was suspicious of the idea of staying in the hospital. He believes in the logic of the rumours. He would rather choose the other solution. But he thinks about me, about my leg, about the open wound...

We're not staying at the hospital, father —

He asks: - Do you think you will be able to march with your operated leg?

I answer:

- Yes.

The answer sounded sure. But inside, I wasn't so sure about it at all.

He raised his eyes from Snow, fixed them on me and with a lot of gratitude in his voice, remarked: I hope we don't regret it, Eliezer! —

Writing these — words still ring in my ears. Now on the cold, impersonal typewriter the A, memories. And a shiver, a cold shiver takes me through and through. regret? Oh, I regretted it, how I regretted it! If we had stayed in the hospital then - the father would be alive today; And the world would have a different face for me; And I probably wouldn't write this book at all...

Only after the liberation, I learned about the fate — of the sick who remained in the hospital in Buna. Almost all - were saved. The Russians released them. Two days after we left Buna, the Red Army occupied the camp. All the sick survived. or:

But who could have known? Who could put it forward? Who could calculate the closest move of fate on the chess board of Casset?

I tried to calm the father even more, that if I bandaged the leg well - I would not feel the wound. And speaking to him, I felt the wound open. And the snow, the white snow, where I stood, turned pale red.

Red from my blood.

⁂

I didn't go back to the hospital anymore, I stayed in the old block. You have to prepare on the way in.

Martin, the oldest of block 57, distributed double portions of bread with margarine. part way. The clothing magazine became more merciless and everyone got as many shirts and clothes as they wanted.

It was cold outside. A thick snow covered the ground, the camp. Above the head - a lower, with danger laden sky.

I'm going to sleep.

The last night in Buna. Once again: the last night. The last night in the home, the last night in the ghetto, the last night in the wagon and now - the last night in Buna.

How long will our lives drag on, drag on between one last night and the next?

A nostalgic mood in the block. It doesn't look good to leave Buna. Had a good camp. He could be worse. The last night in Buna. From a distance we hear the sounds of gunshots. The Russians are so close, so close. You hear them, but you don't see them! Here - between us and them, between us and the redemption - one night, only one night!

No matter how strong the heart was not armored, a spark of hope entered him. Everything was still hoped for. Another issue of the old ghetto hope: maybe God will have mercy? Maybe the Germans won't show up to take us out of the camp? Perhaps the Red Army will arrive before the night, like the Shekhinah, departs from us?

Then we still did not know the truth. Didn't know that the the camps in the Auschwitz — Red Army was able to easily occupy all environment - almost without casualties and without resistance. Hundreds of thousands of Jews would have been saved in this way. But the generals of the Red Army did not care much about the fate of Jewish subjects. For strategic reasons - and maybe even

Not because of them either - their offensive began two days later. Two days! Thanks to the A, the number of Jewish victims increased by several hundred thousand in two days...

People whisper on the wooden beds. We try to create confidence, a reason to have confidence, from the thunder of the cannons, from the snow that falls from the sky.

Someone calls out:

Try to sleep! Gather powers! —

Almost the same words the mother said, while the lazy night in the ghetto! There

yes. You should try to sleep. Don't talk. Don't listen to stupid, stupid talk. You need to sleep. Who knows if tomorrow we will have a place to sleep.

The leg hurts. Terrible woe, a permanent fire flared up in him. It burns, it tears to pieces. Not really to the end. With such a foot - I thought - there are not many prospects of getting far... I will probably stay in the middle of the road. With a bullet in the head. With a hole in the chest. Of course. It cannot be otherwise. You can't get far with such a foot. If so, why did you start this way? Maybe it's time to stay in the hospital?

Doubtful thoughts fill the mind. Sleep. It wants to sleep like this. Gathering powers. But - how is it possible to close an eye, when my feet start burning every time I try to breathe?

Cannons thunder far away. Cannons thunder somewhere on the Boundary of faith and imagination.

Tomorrow we have to get on the road again.

Fate calls: we must go.

**

The next morning.

The camp changed its appearance. The subjects are

Transformed into strange heroes of a formal tragi-comic masquerade. Each Heftling wore 6-5 costumes: wanted to increase the chances of life, wanted to protect against the cold.

Circus clowns, clowns, clowns... clowns who are wider than long, dead than alive, clowns whose faces were barely visible from the mountain of clothes that covered them. I was looking for a suitable shoe - the largest for my injured foot. Without success. Not found. Mila. I tore some blankets and tied the leg with the rags.

When I was done with that, I went to the camp to look for more bread and potatoes. How can one know what will be on the way? Will there be bread? You have to think about it. Run. Search. Does the foot hurt? He should hurt. Is the open wound bleeding? She should bleed. There is no choice. The pain must be forgotten. and be silent. and run. Rumors: We are being taken to Czechoslovakia. No: no gross roses. No: No Gleewits. No: No... No... Two o'clock in the afternoon. The tension in the camp reached its climax. The last hours in Buna. Then - the march. Direction: Unknown. Purpose: Still more unknown. A snow falls from a cloudy sky. A fiery wind blows and penetrates the marrow of the bones. Already evening. The evening falls. The day sinks in A sea of grayness. It's ready. Ready to go. Only the order is waited for. Our block elder suddenly remembered that because The evacuation order made people forget to clean the block. He is missing four Heftlings, they should immediately go and wash the floor... an hour before leaving the camp! why? For whom?!

- For the liberation army, - exclaims the black elder. Let them know, the Russian soldiers, that people lived here and not pigs.

A strange man! What does he care what the Russian soldiers want Thinking about block number 57? And secondly, did people live here? Since when was a heftling considered a man in a box? For the sake of doing. He wants it that way - it should be that way. The block was cleaned.

Six o'clock. The bell tolls with its fearful wild tenors. It seems that strange, unreal church bells are ringing out an accompanying prayer to a Leviathan. The last bell. Soon, the gate of the future will open. Entry! —

The camp is set up in blocks. The night fell in between. A black cloud descended and greeted us with its mysterious cloak. Although the father lived in the 36th block, he was allowed to stay with me.

The reflectors around the camp lit up. Ten Licker, hundreds of armed s. s. Nikes. Murderous guard dogs. A frozen wind blows in the limbs. I'm starting to regret why the father is walking next to me. for Which causes him unnecessary grief, seeing me walking with the wounded leg?

The gates of the camp opened wide. From that side, the real night was waiting for us. It becomes unethical. Somehow the world is too sad. Somehow everything is too black.

The first blocks march out. We are waiting. We belong to the very last. Block 57. In order to warm up the almost frozen limbs, you fan them with your hands. Gymnastics.

Two pieces of bread in the pocket. They float away without mentioning them. I'm hungry. eat? No. You shouldn't. Not yet. One must overcome the evil inclination. Do not touch the bread. Don't think about bread. Tomorrow. Later.

Blocks march out. We are silent. Our turn is coming soon. Block 53. Another four blocks. Block 55. Another two. 56... — Ot March! Shouts the block elder and his — — — Block 57 — voice was probably heard from one end of the world to the other.

...the march began. The Death March. Our footsteps blazed in the darkness, like fear calling, in a barren dark desert.

Chapter Five

The death march

It was a hard winter night. Cold winds blew and scattered, like haunted demons. The cold poured into the veins and hardened the blood. And we went, went, went, went with the wind, went against the wind, went without a goal, without a taste.

The rhythm of the march accelerated more and more. The Bay Armed SS. Nikes hunted their victims. Faster, faster, even faster, what faster! It didn't bother us too much. Should be faster. When you walk fast - the blood warms up. The body really gets weaker, but the blood, the blood does not freeze. And then: As long as you walk, even fast, it is a sign that you are still alive. Should be faster...

The walk gradually becomes a mechanical run. We run not knowing why and whether we are the ones who run like wild dogs.

Also the s. s. Nikes run. Their loaded guns and "re" wolverines throw fear and it seems that everyone runs faster, in order to escape from them as soon as it would be possible for them to run against them.

A dark night.
Gunshots ring out from time to time. Our guards received the order to use their tools. Shoot! Don't ask any questions, don't wait for any answers, just shoot! And they faithfully carried out the order as usual. At every step, someone from the S. s. His gun unloaded. If a Heftling stood still for a second - he was immediately shot.

One must drag the heavy burden of life to the end, to the border.
our burial will be here. — Otherwise,
One takes one step after another, one drags, with the last remaining, last hidden forces, the withered heavy body: M'mus! Only now did I begin to feel how heavy my egg-gen body weighs. I wish I could throw him away from me. Away, far away, I would certainly do it. Hard to drag one's own body on such a winter night. Suddenly I felt split in two: my body and me. Two separate objects. The body is not me. Oh, if only I could throw him away...

Impossible. You started walking! until the end. You can't stay in the middle. You can't stand in the middle. Don't you dare stop before you have recited the last verse, given the last glance. This is a path with a beginning, but - without an end.

The ranks split. The old and the weak languish in the snow. He becomes, indeed, the dirty snow, their death bed. Loud shots in the starless night.

Next to me was walking - more correctly: running - a Jewish guy from Poland. His name was Zalman. He worked together with me at Electra Magazine. He was often laughed at in the camp. He was a pious man. Often he used to put tefillin in Buna

(There were miraculously a couple of tefillin in the camp) and got beaten after that. He accepted the trouble in love. He was a former Yeshiva student and his method of escaping from reality was: to immerse himself in a subject that he knew very little about with all interpretations.

He was attacked by sudden stomach pains. Literally: He can't go on. He must meet his needs. I pray to him: Zalman, word under a bit! I didn't want anything to happen to him. He was a good, quiet guy.

- Wait a while, Zalman... a few minutes... a little more... soon we will probably stop. We will relax. Then you — will do your needs. Wait. Obviously it won't run like that Until the end of all generations... He answered running and unbuttoning his pants: I can't contain myself anymore! —

Zalman, try! Stand firm! I advised him. —

He didn't follow me.

He sat down in the middle of the road with his pants down. This is the last image I have of him: sitting Thick in the middle of the road, with his pants down.

He died, Zalman on the spot. Not by the s. s. - They didn't see him, didn't notice him. But - why does it matter? Fate, fate chose him, saw him. And the thousands of Ter Heftlingen, who ran forward, forward, because the fear He chased them and chased them, they crushed him! crush! Zalman cried out, pleading with people, with God, with his God, have mercy on him. No one listened to his plea. No one at all heard him cry, scream. The sound of the dead march covered everything around. I didn't think much about men. There wasn't any

Time for it. Instead, I started thinking about myself. About injured leg. Terrible agony, coming from the feet, fills the whole body.

And I got tired. A little more. A little more - I thought - and the last forces will leave me. A little more... and then?

People (people?) fell around me, under the bullets of the companions. A small red flame and - a human being ended his ordeal. The power of a small red flame... Death hovered around us, within us. I literally felt him, could take him by the hand. Could look him in the eyes and beg him: Death! You who are the savior of every person! Take me under your protection, take me with you into your kingdom, there, there where there is no longer the fear of you, the fear of death...

Yes. I asked for death. The idea of death, of not being, assumed an extraordinary form at this moment. After that I won't feel anything. Not the leg, not the fatigue, not the snow, which — Nothing. plastered his face without stopping. Nothing. That's why you want to die. Maybe get out of the queue?... Maybe... What will happen? Then a gun will see me and a little red flame, a little red flame will cut through the darkness of the night...

my father He ran by my right side. Hard, in turn bent, forsopet. No! Don't die! One should not think about death. What will he, the father, do without me? He won't stand it. The only one who keeps him alive is me. May I cancel this power? No. One should not think about death.

In between has the internal action, between wanting to be and

Not being, added a little power, a little extra power, we ran a lot. Forward, forward.

I no longer felt the wounded leg. I knew: it's dangerous. A bad sign. I can pay for it with my whole leg. Just Mila. I don't care. It's not my business. It's not my leg. The main thing: don't think — about the future, about what might happen. Now doesn't it hurt me? Good. This is the most important thing. So I'm able to keep running.

I tried to go slower. Saving powers. Impossible. Waves of people pushed, pushed forward. And they shouted: Move, move! Do not disturb those who want to go, who want to escape from death, move! Move! Move! I had no choice. touched himself. and ran. Mid previous tempo.

— Fate called. And when he calls, you have to go. Go for any price. By all means, by all means. Otherwise - death comes. And death is strong. Very strong. He is the only one who is able to bring strength and strengthening into the blood in the heart of pre-born creatures.

s. s. Guards suppressed. named flow. We ran in the cold, inhuman night. Frosty winds blew, demons danced before their eyes, but people ran forward, dragging the body with them or letting themselves be dragged along with it, despite the fact that everything was pulling down, down to the earth, to the sweet white snow, to the calm, to the eternal calm.

I was too tired and closed my eyes and had a dream. I fell asleep walking. A jolt from behind woke me up. I continued to walk a few steps and dreamed about sleep. I fell asleep again for a minute, until a new push pulled me out of the unreality. Always the same game. The same circle. More than a minute is impossible

Had to keep his eyes closed. Nevertheless, it was so good to sleep walking, even if only for a short minute! What do you know how much you can dream for a small, modest minute... For seconds I dreamed dreams, which could bring happiness to hundreds of people or generations. The road ceased to be strewn with thorns, with agony. I managed to escape from him, escape from reality. The ancient means: the dream. Dream for a minute and then wake up again. Never in the same place. Symbolically... Yes. It was a terribly haunted night. we are pre-Driven from one exile to another, not knowing how long the wandering will last, how deep the nearest exile will be. We knew one thing: a long road ahead of us. Where does he lead? To death? Clear. All roads lead to death. This is the tragedy of man: he comes from nothing and goes to nothing. This life is only a parenthesis. But now? Where does this road lead? An incomprehensible night.

She couldn't sleep anymore either. The tempo of the run did not allow, did not allow to close the eyes. Again, the thought of alternative: maybe go out of the queue? Am I so close to the disappointing end? And again the old answer: I don't have the right to these questions. The father. He walks at my right hand. I can't leave him alone. I am responsible for his life. He lives because of me. And I - because of him. The cross is shining. He is well closed.

I let myself be pushed through the crowd. went ran. Tens of thousands of people fell from the front, from the rear. I - I went. Not looking behind me, in front of me. Like fate itself, I went. Like blind fate. If it can be painted, that

The fate should be embodied in a person, in a certain moment of life - yes, I was the fate that night. Dis. s. Guards were tired. They were often changed. The night was too long. It seemed, she drove away the morning star. Nobody changed us. We had no right to be tired. We marched with severed hands and feet, with dry skin and frozen eyes. The guards surrendered to the laws of nature. We don't. We were sunk deep into the abyss of despair and death. But - not drowned. He who treats death with contempt - death has no control over him. And in that devilish night we looked at everything in us with contempt in the empty eyes of life and death! looked therefore they both had no control over us. In that night of chaos, we were the rulers of the world. — We the betrothed, we the doomed, we the broken.

—

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Then the morning star remembered his eternal mission. The horizon was pale. And gray light. We were without powers, without illusions: they remained behind us, disappeared with the night. The commander of the march announced: We have made 70 kilometers! 70 kilometers in one night! Unbelievable! How could this comical troupe of calicos march 70 kilometers without incident? Unbelievable is the fact that we were so strong, that we possessed so much strength and endurance. We were no longer tired. We are far beyond the border of tiredness, of feeling what should not be. The legs rose mechanically, as if they were not part of our body.

We passed a town in which no living soul appeared. Loaded windows. Empty, empty streets. Some and hide courage and tried to break into a house there. Heftlings found

An hour later - an order: relax.

We fell to the ground, wrapped around the heavy snow and tried to cling to it.

The father woke me up:

Not here... come... a little further... a few meters only... — there is an old shed... come!

Even though I didn't have a shred of strength to get up from the snow, the will to not be sad for him lifted me up. And I went to the shed.

Actually, it was not a shed, but an abandoned, ruined brick factory. Smoked walls and cut windows. Without a roof. Getting inside was impossible. Thousands and thousands of Heftlings stood in front of the door, in a solid, compact crowd. It turned out that this crowd is an ice block of frozen people. To this day, I don't know how we managed, me and the father, to get inside. The main thing: we were inside. on a floor. On the fast baths, from where you were not chased. I let myself fall on the dirty, snow-covered pod bed and immediately fell asleep. Only now I realized My tiredness. I

It was so good to sleep lying down...

True. I actually slept on the snow. But what did it do to me? I didn't feel any cold. On the contrary: a warm current poured into the limbs. And the flow came precisely from the snow.

Suddenly I felt a hand, a frozen one, which patted me lightly in the face. With great effort, I opened my eyes: the father.

Only now did I see how old he had become in one night!

A jam in the heart.

Immediately he would age not by thirty years but by thirty generations!

His black cap came down almost to his mouth. The body shortened. in him — eyes are dry. The lips for- vianette, rotten. Everything — The reflected such fatigue, such joy, such helplessness!

His voice was choked with snow and tears:

- Don't let yourself get caught up in sleep, my child! You shouldn't. — — — It is dangerous to fall asleep in the snow. This can bring eternal sleep. Come, my son, come, stand up!

get up?

How is it possible? How can one rise from warm snow, from such a comfortable grave? I understood the words of the father, but - did not understand them. Getting up turned out to be more difficult than lifting the entire shed with bare hands...

- Come, my son! Get up!

Once again. get up get up?

why? It's so good to lie here, burrow into the motherly snow and close your eyes, and sleep, sleep, sleep...

No, I couldn't get up, get up from the place. Iron nails pinned me to the — floor. And copper, all the copper of the earth poured into my body. And again the metaphysical power of a

Father: He was stronger than me, stronger than my sleep, stronger than death, stronger than the entire world. Just a glance at him, as he stood bent over me, as if over a ditch, and already the limbs were drawn out.

He was tired too. Maybe it was me too. An old, old man was then the father. Nevertheless, he had one concern: to protect me.

If not for that - he would certainly bury himself in the snow and allow himself to be deceived in eternity.

I got up. Bitten his lips. Slipped my arm around his and let myself leave the brick factory.

It did not come easily. Leaving was just as difficult as entering.

An sadness embraced me. Enter, exit, exit enter. Until when? Until when?

People are trampled underfoot. You don't care about them. Life negates death. The living deny the dead.

We are already in the yard. The cold hits you in the face. I have to bite my lips incessantly. Otherwise they will be frozen.

The world dances around me an unreal, wild dead dance; Fiery rings rotate before the eyes. Nevertheless, I walk around the yard, which reminded me of an abandoned cemetery, where the Hebra-Kadisha people had fled and did not appear to hide the dead.

On every step and step, dozens of bodies that went out here, after a silent, imperceptible death. A chain of silence reigned around. Nobody said a word. No one cried, cried or complained. A strange cemetery...

Somehow I could not look at this unholy place; Somehow I — couldn't do all this physically and mentally

Endure. In every lying body, I saw myself. This is how I will look soon, soon, in hours around, in days around.

Come, father, come. Let's go back to the factory... —

He didn't answer. His eyes saw not the dead, but their content, their purposelessness.

Come father. Come on. There is better. We — will be able to apply there. One after the other. I will pay attention to you and you - to me. One will wake the other. He did not object.

With inhuman effort and with even more miracles, we returned to the factory for the second time. We climb up to the first floor and immediately fell on the ground.

Go, go my son. Can you sleep? I will stand on the watch. —

No, father. First you. —

He concluded.

I added myself. Tried to sleep and from too many attempts did not appear. It wanted so much to sleep... The urge — to sleep was so strong, so great. But knowing that you shouldn't fall asleep deeply, because that would mean death, I couldn't even take a nap.

Around us - the harvest of Angel of Death. Now, someone tries to wake up his friend. The latter escaped. Forever. Who was it? His brother? His only friend? Who knows. An eternal secret. When the newcomer saw that he had come too late, he also laid down. and soon fell asleep. Who will wake him up?

I got up and approached him: - Stand up brother, I said to him. - Get up. You shouldn't sleep here, in the snow...

He opened his eyes and I read in them an extremely limited hope:

- Thank you, he answered calmly and absent-mindedly. Let me sleep. I'm tired. Leave me alone. Go. Go and deal with your own business!

His thin, weak voice was covered with a dust of anger. Mila. What could I do? Fight with him? had no power over it. I went back to the father. He daydreamed. And I knew: now I have to wake him up. I did not see his eyes. His cap, the black stocking cap, covered his whole face, so he thought the naive father of mine, that the little cap was able to protect

from cold the whole body.

- Get up father! I shook him lightly and tenderly by the shoulder.

He woke up. Remaining seated and looking around with bewildered, confused eyes, he suddenly decided to find out where he was, in what kind of world, for what and after what. Then he smiled. I wanted to know the secret, the reason for this smile. I was sure that in his current smile one could find the solution to the tragic riddle of human existence, of universal life. But I had the audacity to ask him why it shouldn't be. Not

Outside, a heavy snow fell and slowly, unceasingly covered the dead.

I thought to myself: the two extremes have converged. Jews came (or: didn't come) to be buried in fire and in cold snow.

⁂

The door of the factory opened. An elderly Jew entered. Frozen mustache. The lips of ice. Rabbi Eliyahu. A rabbi in a small Polish town. A dear Jew. In stock

Did people love him. Even capos and block elders. Some kind of purity, an inner purity radiated from his whole being from his sad eyes. R. Eliyahu called him everyone. Gave him the honor, the title. Although he was not the only rabbi in Buna.

A saint and therefore a simple being. A kind of unique. He always used to go around, like a former prophet, comforting his congregation. Strange: His words did not anger him. They calmed him down.

R. Eliyahu entered the factory and his eyes, which this time were more vacant than usual, were cast there in

Here: -

Maybe you saw my son somewhere?

It seemed that words were not coming out of his mouth, but pieces of ice.

He lost his son, Rabbi Eliyahu. The riot was too big, too inhuman. The partition between life and death, between the living and the dead, and has been veiled too far in the white space.

He looked for his son, the holy Rabbi Eliyahu.

They stayed together for three years. Always together. suffered together. Hoped together. Worked together. The fear of existence grew stronger. Went through different camps, selections, trials together.

And now - at the very end - fate separated them. R. Eliyahu approached me and murmured a prayer thick voice:

- It happened on the way. We lost each other. I stayed a little behind the column. He had no strength to run. And he, my son, did not notice it. I don't know: where did he disappear? Where can I find him? Maybe you saw him somewhere?

- No, no, Rabbi Eliyahu, - I answered, not seeing your son. Not seen.

Did he leave, Rabbi Eliyahu, as soon as he came: like a shadow of cold wind and ice.

When he was on the other side of the door, I suddenly remembered that I had seen his son. He walked not far from me. A sad thought crept into my mind: it's a shame I didn't tell Rabbi Eliyahun.

But - then I remembered another fact: the son saw his father, while he remained behind. He saw him! And yet he kept going, forward, forward! — — — kept running

A terrible thought, an unbelievable one, appeared in the mind: the son deliberately wanted to be freed from his father! He felt that his father was weak, almost lost - he wanted to separate from him. throwing off the burden from his shoulders. Throw away everything that could harm him, that could reduce his chances of survival...

Did he, so to speak, see his father...

I thought: Good thing I didn't tell Rabbi Eliyahun. He would collapse. He would let himself fall on the snow and wait for a kiss of death. He would lose his faith in God, in man, in paternal feeling, in human feeling. Good thing he didn't know about the betrayal of his only son. So he may still have a chance to save himself, Rabbi Eliyahu, to continue searching for the lost son-in-law.

And not knowing how, a prayer arose in him hearts:

Lord of the world! Give me strength, I should never reach — what R. Eliyahus son has reached! I should not leave my father in the middle of the road! I should not think only about myself, about

My own life! Or take me to you, send death upon me, before I come to such a thought, to such a situation!

Interesting: Unwillingly, I sent the A, prayer to God to the God in which I was disappointed. —

And suddenly a clarity arose in the depths of myself: a fearful clarity. I felt: I am also capable of this. I too can fall victim to the instinct of life which is stronger than myself, stronger than my attachment to the father, stronger than my will to remain pure and faithful, I too am able to distance myself from that which is dearer to me than everything in the world, from everything that is higher than the world.

No, no - God in heaven or devil on earth, don't put me through such a temptation! I'm afraid of him! I asked God or the devil.

I promised myself to tell the naked truth, no matter how nasty he might be. And the truth is: I was afraid of temptation. I didn't know if he would end up being good, or if I would be his master.

I didn't believe in myself at all. In my strength and feeling, neither.

If I believed in something, it was my right not to believe in anyone or anything.

⁂

...Violence took place from outside, from the yard. It was already night. The steel clouds still hung in the sky, loaded with death and our forewritten future.

s. s. Nikes are called forming ranks.

Entry! —

We are already marching on.

Good. Oh well, what's going on. Walking, you don't think much. When walking, one thinks about walking and not about failures and trials. And I didn't want to think about anything else but walking.

The death march did not end.

In the yard - the dead. They stayed on the snow. Like slain, faithful guards who did not come to burial. Omi happy dead. No one said Kaddish after them. Children left their parents on the snow and did not even shed a tear, leaving from there. Also the heart, the feelings, have become complacent, frozen.

It snows, it snows, it snows.

The tempo of the march has weakened. The guards were also tired, they agreed that we should walk slowly, so that it would not be too difficult for them to walk.

My injured leg stopped hurting. A sign - he was completely frozen. Lose him, the leg. Now he is still dragging himself, because he has in him the power of yesterday, of Pai Ricker week. He is like a wheel that has fallen off a cart, the cart has remained standing, but the wheel is still turning. Mila. Should be a life with one leg. Middle left only. The main thing: don't think about it. Later. Later there will be time to think about everything. Also about foot. Not now. Think now means poison. mortal

Her poison.

Our march has in the meantime lost every organized hai racter. Everyone went as he wanted, as he could. The guards shed less blood, of course they didn't

No power or desire to load and unload the guns. But the angel of death could do without his servants and suns. The cold, the frost, the walk did their thing. People fell like angry flies. Every few meters a person stopped walking, stopped suffering.

They didn't talk. There was nothing to say, there was no one to talk to. The mouth did not want to open.

My father walked beside me.

I tried not to see him.

Despite the tempo not being too fast, the current march is When heavier than the first. At first we still had it in us Unlocked power. Now - not that either.

s. s. Officers sometimes drove along the length of the column. on their motorcycles and encouraged, or tried to encourage us:

Hold on! The goal is near! —

Courage! Another couple of hours! —

Soon, soon we are already in Gleewits! —

We're going to Gleewits, it's called. Well what do we know though we are going

Although the words of encouragement came from their mouths, from the mouths of our murderers, they nevertheless had a good influence on us.

People felt stronger. You don't want to give up on anyone This game, tough for the end of the fight, tough for the goal.

His eyes scanned the horizon. They looked for signs of electrical switches, the sign of a camp. We knew that we were being taken to a camp. Of course, our only dream was: to get there as quickly as possible.

Darkness all around.

It stopped snowing temporarily.

After several hours of walking, we finally arrived Gleewits.

We first saw the camp when we were standing in front of the gate. Air-alarm was. are the lamps of the Electrical switches were off.

Dark Egypt.

We are already inside, in the camp itself, but we do not know what is being done to us, what we are doing to ourselves.

Kapos, guards scattered us to different barracks. Hundreds, thousands pushed themselves to arrive at what was previously a barrack, immediately the barrack would have been the gate to salvation, to life.

In the barracks where my father and I, along with hundreds of other prisoners, were pushed into, there was a panicky disorder. People lay, thrown like useless rags, on the floor. We stepped on torn faces, on indifferent bodies. Only a few cries of protest were heard.

A blind mob overthrew us. Me the father and I - fell to the ground.

Someone moaned: People! You're killing me... have mercy! —

A familiar voice. Who could it be? Who lies beneath me? You're asking me, people! Have mercy! —

The same weak, crying voice. Somewhere she already belongs. These words have different intonations, but - the same voice. And this voice once spoke to me. I had no doubt about that. where? when? Maybe years ago. No: impossible. After all, I came to the camp only a year ago and I heard the voice in the camp. But there is a moment in life when time loses its boundaries, its form; It becomes completely elastic. Then you no longer know the difference between seconds and years.

- pity you...

I know the voice. I know the person below me. who is he I felt that I was expecting him, that I was suffocating him. I wanted to, tried to get up, let a little air reach him, but how? They pushed me too

bodies. It was also difficult for me to breathe. I tore with my nails, bit my teeth, bloodied my face and hands, in order to free myself more or less, in order to fight for some air. No one near me screamed. It surprised me: here I growl, I bite people and they don't scream at all! Immediately they would no longer feel any pain, or immediately I would no longer be capable of paining them...

Suddenly I remembered. I remember whose voice came to me from below me: Juliek! The Polish Jewish boy who played the violin in the camp orchestra in Buna...

- Juliek, is that you? I have business more to myself Like to him.

I do, - — answered the voice, soft and powerless. Am I, Juliek. who are you —

- Eliezer... remember? We worked in the same koi manda... the little one. The little one who once got 25 hits from Idec... remember?

- Yes. I remember. You are it. The little one.

Yuliek was silenced. Perhaps he could no longer speak due to lack of air. Perhaps he was strangled in between.

called to him. - Listen to me, Yuliek! Yes. I hear — Juliek! I — you. what do you want —

Father, he hears. Father, he hears. I wouldn't want to lie about a dead person. I would not want to lie on the dead body of Yulieken. - How do you feel, Yuliek? I asked him, not really To get an answer, just to hear him speak.

- Good, Eliezer. I feel good. Little air. But - not dangerous. I feel strong. Healthy and happy. The legs hurt. Swollen from walking. I'm tired, it's good that I can rest a little. Just my fiddle...

I thought he was out of his mind. What does he want to do here with his violin?

- I don't understand what you said, Yuliek. What's with the violin?

Yuliek struggled hard with someone, with something (and perhaps with himself), in order to utter a word. Only a cast struggles like this for every word.

- I... I'm afraid... the violin shouldn't... be broken... I... I brought it...

I could not continue the conversation, I had other concerns. Someone laid on top of me and covered my face. The whole face. Suddenly I felt that I lacked air to breathe. Through the mouth and through the nose. A cold sweat broke out on me. Here, the end! This is the very end of the road! - I thought. A silent death. Death by strangulation. There is not even the ability to scream, to call for help. After a couple of minutes and - out. Completed the chapter. Finished the whole book. Forever.

With powers hidden from me, I began to wrestle with the invisible killer. All of my life's will, all of my energy have been concentrated on tearing pieces from the neighbor, from the upper neighbor for a breath of fresh air. —

I felt that my nails were tearing into a deformed face. My fingers became wet: blood. The latter did not react. He continued to lie on top of me, immediately his face would not bleed, immediately he would already belong to a world where neither pleasures nor pain exist. And maybe really? Maybe it really wasn't his face? Maybe he was already dead?

To this day, I do not know whether in that shocking night, I did not fight, with all my strength, with all the fierceness of instinct, I a dead man! — fought with

All I know is: the fight ended well. I appeared to dig a hole, a window in the living wall that lay, motionless, on top of me. I could breathe. - Father, how do you feel? - I asked just like that, because I knew that he must lie not far from me.

Good, - his voice from another world answered me, — I'm trying to sleep. —

He tries to sleep. Is it good? Bad? Can you sleep here? Isn't it dangerous? Can one lose vigilance, during any minute death can appear in the form of a tired, tired, more dead than alive heftling, which will settle on your weak body?

I tried to ask myself the question, when did the sound of a violin come from somewhere...

The sound of a fiddle in the dark barracks, where the dead bury the living!

Who is he, the madman, who plays the violin on his own grave?

Juliek!

This must probably be Juliek!

I called to the one I was lying on, - Juliek, do you hear — Juliek, — me?

No one answered. The man below me was obviously dead.

A sign that Yuliek is playing.

He played heartily and dearly, something like a Betty concert Haven. Until then, I have never heard such a pure voice from his violin, from a violin in general. Never in the history of music and sounds has anyone played so beautifully, so heavenly pure, as he, Yuliek, my friend from Buna, played that night, in the barracks of Gleiwitz.

How did he manage, Yulieken, to get out from under me, without me feeling it?

One of the thousands of riddles from my camp experiences. It is a fact that he fought his way out of the crowd. And it is a fact that he played divine, more than divine music on his violin.

Quiet, strangely quiet was in the barracks. Quiet and extremely dark. No one saw Yulieken. But it turned out that one sees the sounds that are born from the strings, from his soul. You could feel that Yuliek is now playing out his whole life. His unfulfilled hopes, his unrealized aspirations. Yuliek plays his burnt past, his dead future. He plays everything he will never play again.

I will never forget Julien, because - I will never forget his macabre concert at that time, which he gave to an audience of dead people.

To this day, when I go to a concert and hear Beethoven play, I have to close my eyes and from the darkness I see the pale, melancholic figure of Yulieken - the Polish Jewish boy who said goodbye to the world, to his friends and his murderers - with the sound of his violin.

Yuliek played for a long time, or what I thought was a long time. I didn't listen to him until the end. I fell asleep.

Only in the morning, when the light of day broke in with a brutal nakedness, in the barracks, we must have found Juliek - a dead man.

He was lying in a corner of the barracks, huddled inside himself, as if he were hiding from the world some invisible treasure that the world did not deserve.

Beside him lay his violin.

His broken violin, which everyone stepped on with their feet, as if on a mutilated dead body, in an excavated cemetery.

And I don't know why: the broken violin evoked more sadness than the dead Juliek.

⁂

We stayed in Gleewitz for three days.

Three days without food, without drink. They were not allowed to leave the barracks. s. s. Men stood around and shot for no reason. Some nervousness gripped them and it went to our heads.

We were hungry. We were dirty. One could not look the other in the face, so as not to see what he himself looks like.

The bread we brought with us from Buna has been gone for a long time. To get a fresh portion - there were weak prospects for this.

In between, the front approached.

Hornet shots were carried from quite close

But there was no more strength to comfort myself and others. That the Germans will not convince us to evacuate, that the Russians will be here soon.

Rumors: We are waiting for wagons to take us deeper, deeper, deeper into Germany itself.

On the third day in the morning, we were kicked out of the barracks.

The camp seemed to be - a group of snowy mountains. .. we ran out and took with us to 5-4 cover, which often gave you the impression that you saw a camp of Jews in front of you,

Wrapped in strange talithim, during a holy day of prayer.
We were driven to a gate that divided the camp into two.

There was a group of people. s. Officers. There are whispers among these ranks: a selection!

The word brought back memories and instilled fear. Fundesti way, people went forward, to the selection, because it was impossible to go back, because there was no going back.

Push people from behind: go, go, go! Faster!

They want to be on the other side of the gate than before. They want to see their fate as soon as possible.

The officers selected the weak, the limping and sent them away to the left. The healthy ones - more correctly: those who could walk with their own strength - and sent them off right.

My father went before me. The S. s. The officer looked at him and sent him to the left. I didn't need more. I didn't want to wait any longer for the verdict of S.S. Officer. I immediately ran after my father - left.

- Hey Young, - the officer shouted, come back, quickly, quickly! You go with the others!

I pretended I didn't hear. - Hey young! Come back!

I pretended to be deaf and tried to blend in with the old, with the uplifted Muslims.

The officer actually took revenge, to save my life. He sent an SS. Man to bring me back from the camp. I didn't give up, I stood up, even though an inner voice told me that I was going down a dangerous path. The SS Man took me by the head, gave me a couple of ringing fists. In between there was a riot and I myself do not know how it is

Between — what happened: I suddenly saw the father and myself

The healthy.

Half an hour later, we were taken out of the camp and after a twenty minute walk, we arrived at an open field, which was cut through by railroad tracks.

We were ordered to stand and wait until the train arrived. We are going to be transferred to another camp.

People are waiting for funds. A thick snow falls without stopping.

One should not sit down. Moving from place - prohibited.

We stood under the snow, on top of the snow and felt the wetness seep into our bones.

After an hour's wait, they brought bread. Everyone received a regular portion of camp bread. Did they really catch the animal? Haven't taken a bite in his mouth for three days. Then people became thirsty. And water - is not there.

Where do you get water from? To wet the tongue, the lips?

Someone came up with an idea: quench the thirst with snow!

With snow! Where do you get snow from? Bend down - you don't dare. What do you do?

A simple thing: you take out a spoon and scrape the snow off the coat.

It really didn't take long until the whole camp was eating snow with bread, snow that was scraped off the roof or coat.

Some soon became ill from it and suffered terrible stomach pains. They laid down on the snow to stifle their pain and never got up. However, this did not stop others from continuing to refresh their souls with God's rich and abundant gift.

The s. s. Officers stood aside and looked at the strange picture, as thousands of people had mails full of

White snow. They laughed among themselves, as one says: Look! Naronim! They kill themselves!

Eight hours - or more? - We waited like this on the free frozen field, near the railway lines and watched the horizon Whether the defeatist train is not yet evident. The train did not arrive until late in the evening. A long train, with many, many open carriages. 120s. — s. Men push us to the wagons. in every carriage Man! They held electric lamps in their hands, the s. SI men. And the image itself of our arrival - was a real nightmare.

The train moved quickly from place. And the long, endless journey began, during which thousands and thousands of people died in the most inhuman ways.

The snow fell from the sky, undisturbed on our heads became more and more dense, more and more cruel. It was cold. Everywhere. In the heart and on the soul. Somehow I now felt closer to death than ever. The long funeral procession cut through the dark night with its silent wailing.

Chapter Six

The death train

A wild primordial chaos ensued. Fathers looked for their children, children their parents and Just lonely their friends. It didn't want to be alone. It was felt: this journey will not go smoothly, without dead people, without sacrifices. He wished he had someone close to him to help With a word, with a look. Then a silence enveloped us. We sat down on the soft snow that covered the floor of the wagon like a carpet and tried to warm ourselves. Turning later to our neighbors.

When the train started moving, none of us reacted. The head was empty and heavy; Loaded with woven memories. Stay here or move on - where is the Uni Tershid? Die today, tomorrow, a week later, a generation later - it's all one. Nothing can move a person who is forced to look death, his death, straight in the eyes and what goes against him.

It was a long, infinitely long night. Longer than many other nights together. Often it turned out that never

Will she not end, that she will last like this, until the end of everything Generations.

When the gray morning appeared in the east, it appeared to me that I was yawning in a graveyard of cursed ghosts.

Human forms, with bent chests, sat crouched, like old dusty tombstones in the misty light of the rising day.

I dug my gaze into this strange dead Kai Ravan and tried to find out who is still alive and who is not. a game" was. It was impossible to distinguish between a being. there really is no difference — Alive and a dead, and hard Perhaps

Then the gaze fell on someone who kept his eyes open and stared at the empty space. bitter sadness was reflected in being with Izzy mature face Some I felt the dry eyes of his blacksmiths to my gaze to them.

Were there living eyes, eyes of a living one? 120 Heftlingen. Shadows of human shadows. lost place One of the blown anniversary candles.

My father was sitting next to me. Involved in soaking Cover, with the black cap over the eyes, with a layer of snow on the shoulders.

A thought flashed in his mind: maybe he is also... also... not?

I spoke to him. Called him. Wanted to scream and didn't seem to do anything other than whisper. No result. He didn't revoked. I was sure: from now on I am alone. All alone.

And an indifference to everyone and to myself - dominated me. Mila, God gave and God took away. The battle ended. No more why and who to fight for. Then the train suddenly stopped. We were standing in a bare field. The sudden OP Set up raised a couple of curious. With superhuman strength, people stood on their feet and looked out. The image reminded of a wagon from which animals bow their silly heads. s. s. Men turned around below and shouted:

- Throw out all the dead! Throw out all the dead!

Let the living rejoice: there will be more room for them! It will no longer be so crowded in the wagon!

Gentlemen, volunteers waved and examined everyone who was not on their feet. Here is one!

Accept him! —

Two undertakers grabbed him by the head and feet and threw him out of the wagon like a sack of flour.

- Here too - my neighbor! He doesn't move! Help me knock him down...

Such calls were heard from everywhere.

My father did not stand. He continued to sit, crouched and motionless.

came and wanted — Two Heftlingen - it seems: acquaintances to tear him away from the place.

Only then did I wake up from my stupor and understand the seriousness of the situation.

And I do not understand to this day from where I took or received the power to save him, my father, from brutal death. I laid down on him, pulled and tore his clothes, patted his face, kissed his eyes, spread my lips to his and Deri while screaming, screaming without stopping:

Father! Father! Get up! Get up, father - don't give up. Don't get —
discouraged...
In vain. He didn't answer. Not responding.
The two undertakers took me by the shoulder and said:
- It's a shame your shouting, little one! He is dead, your father! Do you
understand death? —
- No, I shouted in their face, he is not dead! Not dead! Not dead!

I didn't dare say more than those two words and I hysterically
repeated them hundreds of times.
Somehow I was more afraid of my father's death than of my own
death.
I tried my best to pull him out of the claws of both angels of
death.
And - I succeeded.
The father opened his eyes, the sick, ice-filled eyes
And staring at me in amazement, immediately he would fall from
one dream into another. He didn't understand what I was
doing here next to him, what I was talking to him, what we all wanted
from him. you see Murderer, you see? I called the gravediggers. —
He lives! My father lives!
They considered me for a while, wondering what they had done with their
shoulder. They muttered under their breath not for long" and carried
themselves off - to other dead people.
There were over twenty deaths in our wagon alone. They
were dragged out.
Naked.
Yes, they were stripped naked before they were thrown
from the wagon. Their clothes were grabbed by those who
remained.

This action lasted several hours. Then the train moved from
place and cold winds howled and carried over the cursed world the
mutilated cry of the dead, who were left abandoned, abandoned and
forgotten on Polish mown fields.

⁂

The journey was unbearable. And everyone who survived it had to
later stop believing in natural laws, in their power and value.

We didn't get any food, no water - neither. We only fed ourselves with snow.
Snow instead of bread, snow
instead of water.
And it was cold. And it was tight. The powers left us immediately after the
third day of the trip.
Days turned into nights and nights have left their traces in our soul,
in our blood.
And the train went, went, went. And from the sky the snow did not
stop falling, falling.
People lay for hours, days, one on top of the other and kept silent,
because there was no strength to speak.
The eyes were kept closed. And in the heart you have
Waited only for one single thing - at the nearest station. It was expected that the
train would stop completely in order to unload the newly arrived dead.

This is everything we've been waiting for.

⁂

The journey lasted ten days and ten nights. Each day took its
sacrifices and each night paid its debt to the lord of the eternal night, the angel
of death,

Only a few times we passed through German settlements. It was normal, in the first hours of the day. Workers went to their work. They used to stop and consider us, as if we were creatures of a devilish circus. One of them took out a piece of bread from his pocket and threw it into a wagon. became a riot. A feelinger. A hundred starving men threw themselves in the direction the bread fell.

And they, the German workers, stood and watched the exciting, exotic spectacle.

...years later, I once arrived by ship in the oriental city of Aden. Many luxury passengers were on the ship. And they were looking for excitement, "exotic rates. Dozens of small native children arrived here", who jumped into the sea to catch a coin, which a passenger used to throw into the water. The children sometimes had to stay under the waves for a few minutes, until they packed the worthless coin. And the passengers laughed. Laughed with satisfaction! Oh, so cheap Pleasure! He doesn't even cost six pence" - six pence... I once witnessed such a scene: an elderly woman (from Paris) was standing on the deck and amused herself by throwing pennies to the sleeping children. She had a hand full of small money and down in the sea, almost right at her feet, a dozen black boys were swimming around. And every time the decent, aristocratic lady dropped a penny in the Yam - a cruel fight developed between them, and the fight between the children amused the high-esteemed passenger, because her laughter carried far...

Suddenly I noticed how two children hit each other under the water! One tried to outwit the other. The scene shocked me.

Don't throw any more penis! I asked the lady. Why not? - she answered. - I love to give Charity...

She loves to give charity. And to observe a struggle between two six-seven-year-old children for an insignificant penny.

Then I remembered that morning when our train stopped near a German town.

A worker threw a piece of bread into a wagon. Maybe out of pity.

Although this is hard to believe.

Anyway - the piece of bread fell. and caused the death of dozens of people.

The fight for bread! The struggle for life!

In the wagon where the bread fell, there was a riot, a kind of underwater riot, a war. The wildest instincts of the ancient prehistoric jungle suddenly dominated us all. With the strength of a blinded ox, everyone threw themselves at the fallen bread. They clapped their fists to the right and to the left, crawled over the dead, stepped on the sick, tore dry faces with their nails, all for the sake of bread.

A bit of manna in the desert...

It is a pity that the Torah does not tell us how the Jews received the first manna. Did they fight with each other, did they get injured, did victims fall. Whether such terrible scenes took place there, as they took place here.

The workers, the German workers, continued to stand and look at the amusing spectacle and perhaps at the same time calm their consciences, that here they are doing mitzvah, they are giving charity, bread for Huni Gerike.

It didn't take long and all the workers followed their soft-hearted comrade.
And pieces of bread fell into all the wagons.
Bread and sacrifices.
And they - the good, nice Germans enjoyed themselves, they smiled and laughed.

...Funny: writing these lines, somehow I don't believe myself, myself. It seems: I am writing a horror novel. A novel that should not be read at night. I can't believe that everything I'm writing - actually happened, happened to me alone.
And - only ten years ago!

I think: if everything that lives in my memory, that burns in my heart, were really true - would I be able to sleep at night? Would I be able to calmly eat a piece of bread?

I still see before my eyes the scenes that I experienced that morning while the bread fell from the sky. Unfortunately, a piece of bread also fell into our wagon. Like Honey

As tired as I was, the fatigue was stronger. I stayed in my place and didn't pretend to know: should bread fall - even from the sky, I won't kill myself to get it simply - I had no strength, not only to fight, but also to eat hard bread. I sat in my corner and watched how people become animals, wild animals, while others above people take the bread from their mouths.

The heavenly bread fell into an end of the wagon. Didn't last a second and the other end was empty.

A young man stood a few meters from me and bit into the ear of the one who was standing in front of him: he also wants to beat himself to the bread!

The latter pretends not to know. The pain has no effect on him. The main thing: bread.

Suddenly I see an old Jew come out from the side. He crawls on all fours, because the forces have long since betrayed him. His hand - firmly pressed to his heart. At first I thought that someone had hit him, wounded him, during the crazy fight. Supposedly, someone punched him in the heart. Then - I first understood. The old man took out a loaf of bread from his bosom and quickly, hastily, almost ecstatically shoved it into his mouth. A satisfied smile - like a grimace - illuminated his death face And - immediately disappeared. A shadow grew behind him as if out of snow. And he, the shadow threw itself, like a murderer on the old man. Both of them began to embrace each other. They scratched each other's ears, kicked their feet in the stomach, in the heart, in the stomach.

The old man appeared to raise his head. I saw that He opens his bloodshot eyes. A joyful surprise ignited in them:

- Mayor! Mayor! - Have the old man's lips business card. Mairel, my son! Didn't you recognize me? Oh, you hurt me so much... His eyes became dead.

Meyer still tried to tear the piece of bread from Wayne Father's bosom.

- Mayor! You beat your father! The old man sighed. - I also brought you... also brought you... brought bread... life settled down... and... you, hit me! beat your old... Your old father!

The old man lay like a cast. His lips stopped moving to whisper, to shout. Meyer said. He held the tiny piece of bread in his right hand and with his left, wiped away a strand of blood that trickled from his eye.

The old man still kept his fist closed. Another piece of bread was in his hand. He wanted to bring it to his mouth. Die with a piece of bread in your mouth. His eyes were staring from

Too much clarity. He understood. Everything understood. He lay on the threshold of death. And in such a situation, in such a second you understand everything. He raised his hand, brought it to his half-open mouth, and his face suddenly slid with desire for the bread... The hand with the bread slowly rose to his mouth... It seemed that the old man was doing it unmixed, so that the pleasure of waiting for the food would last longer... His eyes literally popped out of their sockets... I see the black, broken teeth... Here, this Bread is near the lips. And then - then Mayor, Mayor Herr Son, made a leap and snatched the last piece of bread from his father's hand.

The old man has some kind of business. what? a will?
No one heard him.
Neither does his son.

The old one fell. Death. And his son, the only orphan, ate bread.

And I still saw the old father, lying on the floor of the wagon. His hand was stretched out to the sky, as a protest to God, who turned Mayron into a murderer. For a long time I could not consider the old man. My eyes focused on the sun again. He continued to struggle. Some people noticed the piece of heirloom bread in his hand. They threw themselves at him. He tried to fight back, but the crowd around him became more and more enraged, more and more thirsty for blood.

When he left, the crowd left two dead bodies on the floor: the father and the son. They were stepped on. Their bodies, their presence, were not noticed. The father and the son. Offerings of bread. Both died - lonely and hungry. Fluzim pointed out to me that someone was laughing behind me. I wanted to see who was laughing.

But - I was afraid.
Yes, I was afraid to confirm that the laughter was coming
Not from behind me, but from me alone.
I was 15 years old then.
do you understand 15 years.
God — And my whole generation, is — it a wonder that I do not believe, not in and not in man, not in the feelings of a son and not in the love of a father?
Is it any wonder why I can't believe that I experienced it myself, saw it all with my own childish eyes?

⁂

An old acquaintance of my father's traveled with us in Vogon: Meir Hatz. A solidly built Jew, with a thunderous voice and energetic hand. In Buna he worked as a gardener and used to bring us, from time to time, a green tomato. Considered, both from a physical and a moral point of view. Indeed, due to his health condition, he was nominated as Wagon commandant. I have him to thank for the fact that I arrived alive in Buchenwald.

It was during the third (or fourth? Who can count it all... we lost track of time) night of the journey. We all sat huddled together and tried to catch a dream. Suddenly I woke up from my dream and felt someone grab me by the neck. Just like that. for nothing. With the last of my strength, I screamed only one word: Father!". Only the one word. I couldn't see and couldn't scream any more. My unknown killer suffocated me and stifled every word, every cry in me.

My father, to my luck, also woke up and tried to free me from
the murderer's hands.
But he was too weak.
He applied to Meir Katz:
-Mayor, do something! My son is strangled!
This saved me - literally at the last minute. Mayer
tore down the murderer from me with his fists. Katz
I do not know to this day who the murderer knew
His and why he wanted to kill me.
I didn't have any bread with me.
Probably a fit of madness.
A mistake. — Or
Mayer Katz.
He also died in this transport.
Two or three days before we reached Buchenwald, he said
applied to my father:
- Solomon, I'm losing my strength! - he complained. - I
Don't hold it...
My father tried to encourage him:
- Mayer, Mayer! Don't let yourself fall! Hold on! Must! You must
Endure! You must want to persevere!...
And instead of answering, Meyer silently shouted:
- But, Solomon, Solomon, I can't do it anymore... What can I do?
I'm not good enough!!!
My father takes him by the arm. And Meyer Katz, the strong one,
The eternally healthy Meir Khats wept. His son had died
Still in the very first days of hell and only now he mourns him. Until now, he always
avoided the subject and we were grateful to him for that. Now
the spring of tears is with him
opened up.

My father comforted him, even though he knew that soon it
would be everyone's turn to say:
I can't do it anymore! —
On the last day of the journey, a terrible wind blew and
penetrated to the soul.
On top of that, the most terrible snow that I have seen in
my life fell: thick and evil and poisonous.
It was felt: the end is near. The real end. It will be long
stand it anymore. Can't
Someone stood up and said:
Jews! You shouldn't stay sitting in this weather! We all will —
Get frozen! Let's get up, get moving...
We all got up. Even the dead - it seemed
- rose with us. Everyone was attracted to Fessi
If he pulls his hooded covers and pulls them up over his head, the whole
wagon will immediately turn into a crowd of worshipers with the
Tallit over the heads.
People stop at Neila.
And we shook. The wind, the snow, the wagon, even the sky - everything
suddenly started to shake. And we waited. The prayer of
life. The prayer of death. The sword of the Angel of Death is heard
swinging. People pray. A multitude of dead people pray.
Fluzim heard a cry from Vogon. A cry of woe from
wounded animal. A
The picture was too scary, too macabre. Some could not
bear the dumbness. Did they tear each other up. And their voices came, as if from
the other world.
Soon we all followed them.
The whole wagon began to scream. Just scream in the wind and the
snow. Not knowing why and until when.
The wind blew, immediately he wanted the whole train

to be carried away. The snow fell without ceasing and the screeching of wagons rose to the sky. And finding locked, hammered doors there - he returned.

It didn't take long and all the wagons also responded. Some twenty wagons with Heftlings poured together in one single death cry.

Yes, it was felt: impossible to endure this any longer, impossible.

The end is near, here, the train is dropping on the mountains of Tay Ringer Forest. Even he, the train, is not fit to pull the wagons. And me alone?

The divine tragi-comedy is nearing completion. The last replicas of the last act. You no longer believe yourself and others that you will survive, that you will endure. One becomes aware of fate. Completed. There were no more than a few thousand Heftlings and one Meir Hatz. Several thousand Meir Hatz's were in the twenty hearses.

Meir Katz cries. He asks: Why don't they shoot us on the spot? Even though we don't have to suffer so much, — for so long?

- Rabbi Meir, we are coming. Soon, I just called myself. soon...

But - he didn't hear my words.

The wind howled and howled too much.

And we all stood in the open wagon, under the flood of snow and - hysterically, madly screaming.

⁂

The same evening we arrived at Buchenwald.

It was already late at night.

"Men from Buchenwald camp protection" came to take us out of the wagon. The dead were left in the wagon. Only those who appeared to be able to drag themselves on their feet got off.

Meir Hatz remained in the wagon.

— He really couldn't stand it. An hour before the end it froze. pre-

Like many others.

The last crazy day was the scariest.

About 40 Heftlingen were captured by the wind of death, only during the last day.

In general: we joined 120 Heftlingen. Ascended - 12.

Among them: my father and me.

Buchenwald...

Chapter Seven

Buchenwald

Of the more than twenty thousand Heftlings who left Upper Silesia with our transport, we stayed close to 5-6 thousand.

The camp guards lined us up to five and led us into the camp.

S. was waiting for us at the gate. s. Officers. After we were counted, we were led to the appeal site.

Here we were given orders through the microphone. Expose yourself to a hundred, go five steps forward and so on.

I held my father's hand in mine. The old fear: not losing sight of him.

A few meters from us was the building of the crematorium, but - it didn't scare us anymore.

A camp guard said that they were taking us to the bathroom and then to the blocks! —

The idea was hilarious! A warm shower, a real bed... a heavenly vision!

I noticed that my father is silent too much. Dad. I applied to him, hold on! yet —

A few hours! Then we go to a block, to a bed, you will rest... He did not answer.

And I myself was so tired, so apathetic, so resigned that his silence left me indifferent.

Unwillingly and unknowingly, I thought more about myself and less about him.

The only request, the only prayer in the heart: get in The faster in the bathroom! No more standing here in the cold wind, like a frozen sky, in the shadow of the crematorium...

However - the entrance to the bathroom was blocked by a living wall.

Thousands of Heftlings had the same request, the same prayer in their hearts. A riot, a riot, a war between shadows.

The camp guards were forced to take measures to establish a proper order at the entrance.

Bloody comb, protruding teeth, swollen eyes.

Old and young elders - who did not have the strength to push themselves at the entrance to the bathroom - lay down. On the snow and word on the end, on death.

Tens of Jews, I saw myself, who allowed themselves to be ruled by the magnetic attraction of the snow, went out on the spot. Sh

My father also wanted to lie down on the snow: -

I can't... I can't... - he muttered.

I pulled him with force to the entrance of the bathroom. Perhaps we will succeed in cutting through the people's wall and find ourselves, for the first time in such a long time, under one roof...

We did not succeed.

We got a couple of sticks over the head and we were locked (or rather: I decided) that it is better to wait a little, before being killed by a blow. The frost is sharper in between

And instead of blood, I felt ice in my veins. Time went on - naturally - slowly. Every minute wanted to compete with infinity. Here is the revenge of time! During the whole journey, we ignored her, not being aware of her existence, of her course. Now you feel her...

My father drew me to a hill of snow, where human forms lay like sunken winter tombstones.

Leave me here, - my father pleaded with me. I have — no strength. Have mercy on me... Leave me alone... I will wait until we can go into the bathroom... You will come and call me... Go... I can't...

I wanted to cry. After so many days of suffering, of sacrifices - should I lose my father now? Now, while we stand before the gate of life, of warmth? I became angry with him:

Father, - I shouted to him with a wildly furious voice, - — Father! Get up! Immediately! God forbid you can get a loony gene inflammation if you lie here! Get up, come!

I tried to lift his body.

He asked me with a pleading voice:

Don't yell at me, my son... have mercy on your old father... — let me lie here... I'm begging you: have a good heart... I'm so tired, so tired....

He became like a child: weak, submissive, sad. But, dad! I called, you mustn't stay here! - I'm not allowed? What do you — mean, I'm not allowed?

Some mysterious smile appeared around his white mouth. Dad, Dad! Look around! Look around you! Dead everywhere! Dead — bodies! They all wanted to rest on the snow and see what happened to them! Dad, look what's happening to the one who wants to lie down in the snow...

The mysterious smile still shone on his shadow Face: - I see, my son, I see everything, he answered. - They sleep. Let him sleep. I haven't rested for so many days and nights... not a single eye closed... let me catch a dream... just a few minutes...

His voice at that moment was so tender, so soft, so full of love and childlike purity.

I continued to shout - although the wind dragged my voice to the farthest reaches of the deaf world:

Father, they sleep, yes, they sleep! But - the eternal sleep they — sleep! Look!

I can't look... let me relax... we argued — like this, for long, long minutes, my father and I. But - I felt with all my senses that I was not arguing with him, but with death itself, with death which had already chosen him as one of its closest victims.

I stayed with my father. Didn't want to leave him. I did not try to lift him from the snow-covered ground. Perhaps we shall succeed in rescuing him at five minutes to twelve, while I shall see him drawn into the deceitful net of Sleep?

Suddenly I saw that the hill on which he is lying is not made of snow, but of old covers or completely dead bodies. The whole apple field was covered with such hills Of dead Jews, who were brought by the supreme providence to die here, on the foreign snow, in a devilish winter night. Everywhere - piles with covers, everywhere bodies or Gussi Fat people. If Perce's lost soul were to reach the court of appeal of Buchenwald, they would not be able to bring it before the Lord of the world.

Three gifts - only a thousand and they act as an act of accusation against the Lord of mercy and judgment, who allows himself to be judged, while he himself does so many things without a reason and without a measure.

⁂

Then the air raid alarm came.

Sirens blew and all lights went out. Camp guards took a chance to drive us into the blocks.

And I don't know how it happened, but suddenly I saw myself in a block. We will be bathed later... that's what we were told. In the block, we, as if paralyzed, fell into the boxes (beds). There were actually pots of soup at the door, but - only a few amateurs were there. Who still had the strength to think about soup, about food? All that was prepared was: death (and even less) in order to go to sleep, in order to forget the world and oneself.

A drop of lead fell on me.

In the morning, right after I woke up, I remembered without him, without my father.

Yes, I was able to lay down to sleep, to sleep for a few hours - and this even though I knew that the father was weak, that the father was on the threshold of death!

And I remembered him only when I was already More less rested!

Only then did I go looking for him.

And looking for him, a thought arose in me that will accompany me all my life, a thought that will hinder all my joys and will be the bitter drop in every glass of wine that I will drink.

The thought - here it is: I wish I wouldn't find him!!!

it's quite simple: I hoped not to find him — Simply. Understand well, anymore, my father. And that way I will feel freer, that way I will have greater chances to fight for my own existence!

Clear: I soon banished that thought from my mind, but that does not diminish the fact that it was born in me, in my heart.

I went to look for the father.

and did not find him.

For hours I looked for him among the thousands of Heftlings block and in neighboring blocks and did not see him.

Then I suddenly noticed that there was hot coffee near the door. Hundreds of people fought to get a sip of warm drink. I also went...

I hear fluttering like a voice, a distant, sick voice calling me from a box:

Eliezer, my son... bring me a little... a little coffee! —

He!

Dad! - I called out, - Are you here? I was looking for you.. — where have you been? Did you sleep well? Rested? feels like Better?

- Yes... but go... bring some coffee. My mouth is dry... and I don't have the strength to walk. Go ahead and say that I'm sick...'

Say he's sick? It seems that he has a high fever. tell whom? No one to talk to. And secondly, who cares, who cares at all that he is sick?

I ran to the door, ignoring the blows that fell on my head. Now it was my turn to turn into a wild animal. With brute force I approached the kettle and got a mug of black coffee.

First of all, I drank a little and then brought everything to the father.

I will never forget the sad grateful eyes of my father while he drank the warm coffee.

With a little black warm water, I felt more pleasure and satisfaction in him than in my entire life.

Only now did I see how weak he was. He was lying stretched out on the hard wooden bed and his lips were white and dry, like chalk. His whole body went into convulsions. I wanted to stay near him, but then the order came: to leave the block! He must be put in order, he must be cleaned...

The sick were allowed to stay on their beds. The pai ter - too. And since it was wet and cold outside, I thought, God, why did the father stay inside.

We stayed outside for five hours. When the cold became unbearable, people tried to force their way back into the block. Standing at the door were the house servants and they - they knocked. At first, the clappers helped and created an empty area in front of the door, but later many unknowingly made fun and actually wanted to go back into the block. The guards fell upon an original invention. They brought long pillows (which are used by fire fighters) and sprinkled us with water. Soon ice stains appeared on the Heftlingen's clothes. And often on their bodies.

—

When the gates of the block were opened, I immediately ran to the father:

Did you eat, dad? —

In between we were distributed sum.

No. —

Why? —

It was not given to us. Home services have explained that —
All of us, the sick, are going to die, it's a shame the soup... I
bowl of soup. gave the father half a
once again: it suddenly became clear to me that I — But
Don't give her all your heart! Somehow I
was angry at myself, at him, at Pai
Because he can't get his bowl of juice for himself, he has to eat mine!

I also did not support the temptation!
if not actually - I left mine — Psychologically
parent

And this thought still haunts my dreams and turns my days into nights of soul-searching.

The father became weaker and sicker day by day.
His face took on the color of yellow autumn leaves that wander, aimlessly, on strange, bare fields. His gaze became chaotic, foggy.

On the third or fourth day after our arrival in Buchenwald, we were led into the bathroom. Everyone had to go. Even the sick. Only they were allowed in the end.

When I went, he was still lying in bed.
I told him that I would return as soon as possible. He shook his head:
OK. He will wait until I come.

While I was inside the bathroom, the block of ours was cleaned and all the sick were taken out. The father too. And they were taken to the bathroom.

Returning, we all had to wait an hour or two in front of the block, until the cleaning would be completed.
My sick leg, without which I had forgotten during the whole journey, started to hurt and bleed.

The whole body lit up and became one big thing
Pain.

I could not stand in one place. Had to run here and there, like a wounded animal, which thinks that physical suffering is connected to the place where it stands.

Suddenly, I saw a strange figure that approached me.

It was not a living figure.

Immediately a dead man would rise from his grave and let himself go over houses and graves, looking for a soul, looking for tikkun.

I cried out. Father! — —

Yes, it was, the father.

Fiery spears tore pieces of flesh from my body. The heart kept bursting. He has changed, so changed, my father! Literally not to recognize him! And his eyes... no, they were no longer his eyes... they sent such an abnormal look into the world!

He recognized me, but did not stop when I called him. He wanted to run further, escape somewhere... I shouted: Father! Where are you running?" And he looked at me and - continued to run, immediately he decided to follow. His own shadow, after his own gaze.

A thought crossed his mind: he might have come down from Sense!

He only opened his own murder chapter and wanted to run away from it. Wanted to find the secret of life, the secret of beginning and end.

He ran among people and looked for himself.

And I ran after him.

The murder began...

⁂

My father was lying in his box, along with five others
Sick.

I sat next to him and spoke to him:

Father... don't be afraid. The doctor will come soon, — soon. You will see. It will be okay someday. You will go to the hospital. You will get well.

The clarity of his understanding suddenly flashed as he became like a little child who wants everyone — to believe him. But grown man, who can make nice promises.

— The doctor? Have his feverish lips business — How can I see him already! He should already come! How can I see myself in Spey Valley... I'm afraid, so afraid...

He suffered from dysentery.

Don't be afraid, father, I stay by your side, you will — Go to the hospital. I promise you. You will be cured there. You will be treated well. You will see...

My comforting words had a good effect on his morale, but sometimes he would rebel and exclaim:

But — oh, I don't want anything anymore! I'm not asking for — anything! Let me lie. Lie here on the bed. I am so broken so tired. I don't even have the strength to go to the hospital. I will collapse in the middle of the road...

His voice brought tears to his eyes. I used to answer him:

They will carry you to the hospital. on a carriage beggar. — Don't worry, father.

Once he suffered greatly from his stomach pain. It was an afternoon. He quickly got up from the bed and remained half-sitting. He asked me to lean closer to him.

He wants to tell me something. I put my ear to his cold mouth:

- Eliezer... I want to tell you where the gold is, the money that I buried in the basement before we left home...

And he began to speak quickly, immediately he was afraid that he would not be able to say everything that was on his heart.

His thought shook me.

No, Dad! I answered. - I don't want to hear about it! I don't — want to know! You will get well and we will both go home...

Here he still found a little strength to be angry:

- Don't say no! You must obey your father! Listen to what I want to tell you...

But he did not finish his words. From too much effort, from too much effort, a streak of blood appeared on his lips and he didn't utter a word anymore.

For a piece of bread, we managed to change places with someone who was lying in the same box as his father, just one floor higher.

I wanted to be close to him.

In the afternoon, the doctor in the block came in. I ran to him and said that my father is sick.

Bring him here! - the doctor ordered. —

- He can't move! - I answered with despair.

- That doesn't concern me, - was the doctor's answer. Having no choice, I ran back to my father, helped him out of the box and took him to the doctor.

The walk was difficult for the father and me too. I had to lead like a little child. And though he weighed

Not more than thirty kilos, each span is his, arrived at us heavy and unusually fine.

The doctor looked at us and asked angrily.

Give the father:

- What do you want?

I replied:

My father is sick... he can't stand on his feet. dysentery... —

business. I — - Dysentery? Has the doctor a Jewish agent - fourth. This is not my

am a surgeon. Go, disappear! Make room for those behind you...

— I wanted to scream, to protest, to be violent, but already we, the father and I, were pushed away without a side.

The father smiled with the smile of a pessimist whose prophecies always come true:

Do you see? I told you... —

I didn't understand what he meant by that, but I answered:

It doesn't matter, dad. Another doctor will arrive soon. We will turn — to him...

- I can no longer walk or stand, said the father asked me Take me back to the box! I did it for him, took him back to the box and him Helped pull out the bones. From minute to minute he became more helpless, more childish.

At times he grabbed my hand and began to kiss it. His mouth became fiery. His star flared up and He didn't stop kissing my hand. I asked for death on myself. Better to die, than to witness such a death.

Try to sleep, dad. Try to sleep, - I asked him. His breathing became — heavier, thicker, hoarse.

He kept his eyes closed, but I was convinced that he saw everything. Everything! The whole truth. If he could speak, he would certainly have something to say about life and immortality, about the good and bad of people, about heaven and God. a A lost smile danced around his heated lips. Tears fell from his eyes.

When the other doctor, after the surgeon, arrived in the block. I woke up the father:

- Come on, dad... let's try again...

Although in my heart I felt that there was no more hope. That all is lost. That the father is already too far away. There is no coming back from where he is.

- Come on, dad... let's try a second time, I asked him.

- Again? - he answered. - I have no strength, my child... no strength, my child...

I knew that he had no power, I knew that going was a shame, nevertheless I wanted to try the last card.

I helped him get up, get up and it took half an hour until we dragged ourselves to the doctor.

I pulled down my father's shirt and thought that the Roctor will treat him.

There was a mistake.

He didn't even get a good look.

He asked coldly ironically — - What are you missing, old man?

The father did not answer. What was he supposed to do? What is he missing? What does he know what he lacks? He himself does not illness. — know what it means and perhaps not even the form of his

I brought the father back to his back.

The doctor decided: the father is not sick. He lacks nothing. He is just lazy. He is lazy, my father. he wants Stay in bed and don't go out while cleaning the block... A wild fury flared up in me. In that moment, I would set the whole world on fire! I wish I had I have enough courage and strength - I would throw myself at him. On the doctor and strangled him, literally strangled! What?! My father is not sick?! I wish he was as healthy as he is sick אין...

Leading the father to the back, I felt that I was carrying next to me and in me, the deepest pain, the most burning anger that the world has ever possessed.

He, the father, only smiled to himself, as someone says: This does not surprise me either.

Then he lay down on his back and I clearly saw how the nails of death dig deeper and sharper into his former face.

⁂

A few hours later.

I came back from distributing bread. I found mine crying like a helpless child whom the whole world hates and insults.

My child, they hit me! He complained to me. —

Who?! - I exclaimed cheerfully, who is hitting you? —

They, here... the French... the Pole... they beat me! Another — gap in the heart, another open door, through which the sorrow And the wrath will come forever.

- My child, I'm begging you... tell them, they won't let me anymore

Hit! What did I do to them? What do they want from me? Why do they beat me?

I quarreled with his neighbors. Seated them. Said that one should not raise a hand on a weak man, on a sick person. Ask them what they would say if they were beaten. Seeing that my words provoked laughter from them, I begged for mercy, cried for them, promised bread — Then and soup, but they should leave him alone, my old sick father. It didn't help at all.

They claimed that he was suffering from dysentery and since he was too weak to go to the throne room, they could not be laid down next to him. The father again shouted and cried that it was not his fault that he was sick and he took me as a witness:

- Is it true that I am sick, my son? You obviously know the truth... You obviously know that I can't, I can't get out of bed... Why do they beat me so cruelly? A terrible bitterness dominated me.

Never been so bitter, so desperate. The joy grew out of my complete powerlessness, of my absolute helplessness. I understood that the string was breaking, that I could do nothing about it. My father is going to die and I am weaker from his death, weaker from his evil neighbors.

Another time he complained that the French and the Pole took the bread from him.

- What is taken? I asked, - were you asleep and they stole it from you?

his voice cried, I wasn't asleep and they didn't steal it. — No, — They took it by force, just like that. What could I do? Oppose? They tore the bread out of my hands and then... beat me once more.

Suffering, sick people can be the worst sadists. They believe that causing pain to others will hurt them less. My father's neighbors have suffered enough themselves. They too were lying on their deathbeds in Buchenwald. And that's why they behaved with such cruelty, with So much inhumanity to my father. I was unhappy for two reasons: first of all because My father beats me. Later, because his bread was stolen. Subconsciously I hoped that he wouldn't Can eat it - I will enjoy it. The doctor still claimed that the father was healthy and - lazy.

Since he suffered from dysentery, my father, he was not allowed to drink any water. But it pierced him. - A little water, my son, his lips are full of business Mr. And he asked for it with so much tenderness and pity that I could not refuse, even though I knew that for him M. Water means, but then everything was already one anyway. With water, without water - the end was too close.

- A little water, my child... I'm thirsty... my throat is burning... have mercy... have mercy on me... Have mercy on him! I - his only son!

⁂

On the seventh or eighth day of our stay in Buchenwald, the box elder, who used to distribute bread to the entire box, came to me.

- The old sick man in the lower box is your father? he asked.

—

— יאָ.

He is very sick - he said, the elder Box. —

- I know, - I answered with bitterness. But the doctor doesn't want to know about it.

The box elder looked me straight in the eyes:

The doctor will not help him anymore. - You - neither. —

What's your name? Did - I asked and a shiver ran through my whole body. —

The box elder put his dirty hand on my shoulder and enlightened me with a matter-of-fact tone:

- Listen, little one, don't forget that you are in the cattery. Here everyone has to fight for his own life and not think about Annie Dere. Not even about a father. There is no father, no brother, no relative. Here everyone lives - or dies - for himself. Well, I advise you: don't give away your food for your old father. You won't help him and you will lose yourself. Opposite: His food, you should get...

I listened to him until the end. His words were etched in his mind. I didn't even protest against his stupid logic. A hidden voice in me argued: He is right, the block elder. The father can no longer be helped. No one. Too late. How good it would be, if I would get two portions of bread every day instead of one, two bowls of soup, but one...

But seconds later, I completely drove the A, thought from my mind and since I felt guilty because of the very thought, I ran to bring a little of my own soup to the father.

He could not even swallow a spoonful of soup.

Water! - He asked, water! —

- You must not drink any water, father! I have him given to understand.

Why are you so mean to me, Eliezer? Have mercy! Don't — be so mean to me... Bring a little water, even a little...

I brought him water.

On the same day, in the evening, the disaster happened.

The end.

During the appeal. The healthy had to stand in front of the block in order to be counted by the S. s. Men. The sick stayed in their boxes. My father and I stayed inside like that. He - because of his dysentery and I - because of my bandaged in — leg. The father was lying in the lower box and I was in the upper one.

The sick had to lie with their heads out, so that they could be counted.

Housekeepers counted us, a few times and waited on the S. s. Man who had to come check the appeal.

When he entered, there had to be an absolute calm, a complete silence in the block.

Even then, in that evening it was calm, dead calm when appeared. the S. s. Man Block, only one, a sick person disturbed the silence: mine Father!

In the middle of counting, a voice joins me, a prayer, a plea for mercy:

Eliezer! Come on! Don't leave me alone! Ku-u-u-m!!! —

The block elder looked around to recognize the voice and when he found where it was coming from, he angrily screamed:

- Hey, old man! Do you want to be silent there?

My father did not hear anything and no one - apart from his inner voices -. He called again:

- Eliezer, my son! Come... I want to tell you something... just you... I want to tell you something... Ku-u-u-m! Don't leave me alone... A-li-e-zr...

I heard his voice, understood the words and their meaning, understood the tragedy of the moment and - remained in my place.

His last request of life - to have me next to him during his death, while the soul leaves his sick body - I did not fulfill.

Because of cowardice!

I was afraid. Afraid of getting hit. Therefore I remained deaf to his cries.

Instead of sacrificing my dirty rotten life and going down to him, taking his hand, calming him down, showing him that he is not alone, not — lonely, that I am next to him, that I feel his sorrow, instead I stayed lying in my place and prayed to God. He should stop calling my name, stop shouting, so as not to be beaten by the block servants.

But my father was no longer conscious.

His wailing husky voice continued to cut through the silence and called me, only me.

Here also the s. s. Man gets angry. He approached him, the father, and hit him on the protruding head with a stick:

Be quiet, old man! Shut up! —

He didn't feel the shock. I - I felt them. And yet I did not respond. I didn't jump down

From the top box. I left the s. s. Husband beat my father. I left my old father alone. Later: I was once again angry with him, with the father, for making such scenes, for crying loudly, for provoking him to be beaten...

Eliezer! A-li-e-zr!!! Come, come! Don't leave — — me alone... His voice came from so far, from so close! But I did not move from the place.

I will never - never forgive myself for it.

I will never forgive the world for what it has brought me to, what it has made of me a different person, what it has awakened in me the devil, the lowest evil inclination, the wildest instincts.

After the appeal, I immediately jumped down from the upper box and ran to him. He was still breathing.

but silence. —

He lay with closed, numb eyes. in sweat He bathed. The lips moved. I was sure they were muttering something. I leaned over and wanted to hear his unspoken words. The last words! Too late.

My father no longer recognized me. For a couple of hours I stayed next to him and looked into his face, deeply engraved in my heart, so that I would always remember him, when waves of joy would later, perhaps, try to drag me away.

Then they drove me to bed.

I climbed up on the top box and didn't know that the next morning, when I came down, I would no longer find my father.

This happened in the year 18 of the year 555.

⁂

10th century. In the morning.
I got up and ran down to my father. Another patient was lying
in his place.

No longer had a father.
An orphan left.

Very early, after nightfall, they took him away. In the
crematorium. Maybe he was still breathing...
There was no Menin Kaddish to say. There was no grave to
light — the candle on him. Nothing was his grave sky. The light - I, his
son. My Kaddish was - and will be - all the words that I will say,
that I will hear. Be
an orphan
His last word was: My name. a call And I didn't answer.

18 in the tribe.
When a candle goes out, the light remains and only the
flame disappears.
YH Beshbat a candle went out and both the flame and that
Lights are gone.

But I didn't cry and it mostly hurt me
Igetun: This can't cry. The heart turned to stone. The spring of tears
- dried up. I didn't even feel any real sorrow. On the
contrary: if I had then searched in the deepest depths of my
soul, I would probably have found there a divine niche
and a fearful spark of satisfaction...

Chapter Eight

The end and the beginning

I stayed in Buchenwald for three months. More precisely: until
April 11, the day of liberation.
I — will not describe the era - the last era of my camp life.

She was anything but interesting and certainly not a subject for literary
descriptions.
I became apathetic to everything and everyone. Nothing
surprised me and nothing touched me.
I was transferred to children's block No. 66, where about
600 children were found.
I was one of them. Anonymous, unknown. My two friends, young
boys: Ervin Farkash and Anchi Meisner.
Events took place in the camp. People came people disappeared. I
was not interested in everything.
The front was approaching and in the camp people joined
Prepare an armed resistance in case the Germans try to liquidate
the camp, five minutes to twelve, but I had no idea about this.

I saw nothing and heard nothing.

Like a moon climber, I used to wander all day in the block - and when it was possible also outside the block - and dream Only one dream: food. I didn't think about my father. Not about the mother either. I have not been able to think about who it should not be. Be. Even about himself - not either From a child I became an old man. An old man: hears feelings and Job's thoughts. The heart became petrified. The flesh, the blood was removed from me. I became a stone. A hard, cold stone. A tombstone.

A tombstone. After whom? After the father? After the mother after me alone? Still my childish illusions? After my religious hopes, maybe after all together. Often I used to dream, as I said. Yes, about a bowl of soup it is usually called: aftershock. As Dreams about truth, about freedom are man's false dreams.

Prophecies about justice and equality are man's false prophecies.

Man is: the striving for bread, for meat; Man is: the striving to satisfy his instinct. Man is completely instinct. Through meat. And not Heart. And not spirit. And not moral. I learned this in Buchenwald. And what is learned in Such conditions are undoubtedly true, the purest truth. Because this person can only be recognized in extreme conditions, while he throws down all masks, social and psychological and appears to us naked, as he really is.

In Buchenwald I saw the true face of man. this

Face of a human animal, which is worse than a real animal Oh God, woe to you, woe to man, how insignificant and small you must be, if the human being was created in your image!

גאָט...

I stopped believing in his existence. But - along with that, I continued to believe in his badness. Sometimes a cry of protest would burst out of his chest To the throne of honor and then I used to ask him: - God, Almighty God! Why do you show your strength, your existence only through cruelty? Why do you appear to man only in black light, only in suffering and in beauty? Those who believe in you say that you punish the man, that is why he suffers. A trick, a gray se! To punish the weak, poor, helpless man! It is easy to punish. It's harder to help. And you, God, punish. You created this person for yourself, so that you would have someone to punish, someone to punish. And from whom to die. You laugh at his fineness. of his faith. laugh! The sky thunders with your laughter! Ah, God, how far have you escaped from your own image...

Deeply. — I often used to argue with God, but inside I knew that I was not talking to God, but to myself, to my past as a Yeshiva boy who studied Zohar and wanted to bring the Messiah.

⁂

On April 5, the rhythm of the story accelerated. The dread symphony played its last chords. We held on for the final.

Afternoon, around five o'clock. We stood in the middle of the block and waited for the S. s. Man should come to pick up the appeal. He didn't come. Such a thing has not yet happened since the representation of Buchenwald. People felt: something is going to happen!

Two hours later we already knew everything. The block's radio
relayed the camp leader's order: all Jews must go to the appeal
site!
The end!

Five minutes to twelve... Hitler is going to fulfill his promise. The
— American army is close. Buchenwald is about to be released. However
The Jews will not be entitled to see the freedom. The
themselves — Jewish children of block 66 - and I among them - let
go in the direction of the appeal site. There was no way out. Gustav,
the Polish Jewish Home Service of block 66
Trivan and his staff spoke words... but on the way we met
camp guards. And they - instead of driving us to the appeal site, they
whispered to us: Go back to the blocks! The Germans want to shoot you!
Goes back in
The blocks! And do not touch you from there!
We went back to the block and hid in the boxes. There we
learned that the camp's underground movement decided not to spare the Jews and to
protect them from liquidation.

In the same evening, our technical block elder (a bald
man!!!) rewrote us all for gentile children, and that's how the
night ended. Without sleep. in fear
In the morning, the block radio brought new orders: since
the gentiles are hiding Jews, a general appeal is made. For all
Heftlingen!
This time the appeal took place. The camp leader then announced
that the camp would be liquidated and ten blocks would be
evacuated every day.
From that day on, they stopped distributing food. No bread, no
coffee, no soup. And it started

Evacuation. Thousands of Heftlings crossed the Ai Zerne Gate every
day and died on the way. Hiding was impossible.

I didn't even bother to hide. I let myself go with the flow. Ten
times I have already stood in front of the iron camp gate, on the
threshold of death and always something happened that brought us
back to the block.
If I didn't die then, it was only thanks to the almighty accident.
wanted to go to the gate: near — Because I was hungry, I even
the gate, bread and marmalade were distributed.

On the tenth of April, we remained about 20,000 people in the
camp. Several hundred children and the cream of the camp leadership.
It was said that by the evening we all have to leave Buchenwald, which
has to be blown up immediately after that. —
We stood on the huge appeal site, in rows of five and waited for the
gate to open. A lofty alarm came by chance. And during an air alarm,
all gates must be closed. The air alarm lasted until the evening. And since
you're not allowed to take your children outside at night - we went
back to the block.
The last shipment was postponed to the morning: the 11th of
April. The hunger tormented. Nothing for 6 days - nothing; ate Apart from
old, rotten potato peels, which were found on a garbage — grass and 6-5
heap.
In the morning, around 10 o'clock, S. s. Men appeared in the small camp, in front of
Block 66, and began to drive us, the last victims, to the appeal site, to
the gate.
then the underground movement decided to start the armed — But
struggle against the S. s.
Armed men suddenly appeared in the camp. A shot was heard.
Grenades exploded. Me, children, zer

Nen lay on the floor of our block and waited. It was not believed that we would be saved, that we would be released.

The fight did not last long. It was quiet in the camp around 12 o'clock. The s. s. escaped and the resisters took over the leadership of Buchenwald. At 6 o'clock in the evening, the first American tank appeared in the camp. We are free people!

⁂

The first free gesture: the starving people went out of their way to get something to eat. Only food was thought of. Not about revenge. Not about the parents. Just about bread. And even when this has already been asked Hunger - people still didn't think about revenge. The next morning, Jewish boys ran to Weimar in order to Rob clothes and potatoes. and to enslave German successes. The historical mitzvah of revenge was not fulfilled.

Three days after the liberation, I became dangerously ill: stomach poisoning. I was taken to the hospital and the doctors said that I had passed out. For two weeks I lay in the hospital between life and death. My condition was getting worse day by day. I woke up on a beautiful day - with the last of my strength and went to the mirror that hung on the wall. — I wanted to see myself. I haven't seen myself since the ghetto. A skeleton looked out at me from the mirror. Skin and bones. I saw the picture of myself after my death. At this moment, the will to live awakened in me.

I - not knowing why - raised a fist and broke the mirror, broke the image that lived in it.

And - I fell weak. From that moment on, my health improved.

I remained in bed for a few days, during which I wrote the draft of the book which you hold in your hand, my dear. Reader.

— — — But now, ten years after Buchenwald, I see that the world is forgetting. Germany is a sovereign country. The German army was resurrected. Ilse Koch, the female sadist of Buchenwald, has children and is happy. War criminals walk the streets of Hamburg and Munich. The past is erased. Forgotten.

Germans and anti-Semites say and talk to the world that the story of six million Jewish saints is only a legend and the world, the naive world, will probably believe in it, if not today, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

I thought: it would be worthwhile to publish in the form of a book the notes that I took down in Buchenwald. I am not so naive as to believe that this book will change the course of history and will shake the conscience of humanity.

A book no longer has the power it used to have nowadays Had once. Those who were silent yesterday will also be silent tomorrow. I often myself, now, ten years after Buchenwald: ask Was it worth breaking the mirror? Is it worthwhile? been?

- end -

(31) Simcha Poliakievich a day in Treblinka
Mordechai Strigler in the factories of death
in the shadow of generations — (33) Avraham Nachtoomi
(sold out) 34) Yehiel teacher my home
(35) Joseph Wolf - Reading farts...
36) Tzpura Katsenelson Nahumov - Isaac Katsenelson
37) I. Hirschhoit - dark nights in Paviak
personalities — אוו (38) Nahum Sokol
Laziness (songs) Zaim and Haimla — (Corn 39) Rachel
a life (Elmi) - Moments of 40) a. Al
(sold out) fish and kotsk). — (unger 41) Menashe
ruins of Fluina over (42 — M. Bu the Burshtin
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Voga - Destruction of Czestochowa (46) Shlomo
Ok Yaran in Wander (Songs) Zack (47) Avraham Hom
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Mexico Premier Wirt through the Zvi Kessel Literature Fund,
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prose in Poland (52 Trunck - the Yiddish Jewish
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The MT People of Exodus 1947" (novel) — (54) Yitzchak Perlov
Ike Jews (55 Pinchas Bisberg - Shabbat holidays
Moscow — Warsaw, — Shalom Ash - St. Petersburg, (58-57-56
Ttvienchi — (59) Dr. Philip Friedman
13 Tlamatzke (60) b. Rosen
62-61) David Flinker in the storm (novel)
Janusz Korchak Moses, Jesus, Israelite
65-64) Mordechai Strigler's work
by the Hopper Lieb Literature Fund at
Jewish Cultural Congress, Buenos Aires, (1951)
66) Haim Grade - beautiful of lost stars
Rebecca Kwiatkowska - from camp to camp
My Stormy Years (Memories) — (68) Joel Mastbaum
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(sold out) once lived... — 71) Nachman
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(Presented by the Zvi Kefel Literature Fund, Mexico 1951)

Polish Judaism

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(30) Dr. Y. Kerm Ermish - - The Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto

Press comments about the book series

The Polish Jewry

* * *

J. Falatytsky writes about Jonas Turku's 2nd work for loose stars (The New Word), Buenos Aires, New Year's Eve, 2016:

The two-fold work of 632 pages, which bears the name "lost stars", came out.

The author did not provide any in-depth psychological treatment of the artists, actors and theater people he describes. He did too

This is the 95th and 96th book of the book series "Polish Jewry". It is a new great contribution from the publishing house and through it a prestigious achievement of the Central Union of Polish Jewry. From the pen of one of the finest Jewish actors, composers and theater educators; in the most dramatic circumstances for a Jewish artist who lives Bear every day the ruin of the Jewish theater in the American environment, carrying the heavy burden of the deceased yesterday;

(sold out) (73) Yehuda Elberg - under copper skies
(Presented by the Literary Fund in São Paulo, Brazil, 1951)
(74) Dr. A. Mokoduni - Abroad
(75) Zygmunt Turkov Fragments of my life
(76) Joshua Perle Jews of a whole year
(Interviewed with the Jewish Pen Club's Pritzker Prize in Poland, Poland, Warsaw (193)
(77) Yaakov Leszczynski on the eve of the Holocaust
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79) p. Segalovich the last lodger novel
sold out) :) Reference book - Belkhatov
(81) m. J. Shelievsky - on a full swing
83-82) Isaac Perlov The Returner (novel)
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86-85) Mordechai Strigler Fates
(87) Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum Galicia - my old home
(88) Zalman Shazar Star Tomorrow (Memories)
sold) (outfa (89) Moshe David Giser - the song of a life
(90) p. J. Anchi -- Rabbi Abba and other writings
chapters history — 92-91) Emanuel Ringelblum
(93) Shimon Horonchik Y- In the noise of cars (novel)
Gresham Bader - My Memories (Crack)
96-95) Jonas Turkov - Lost Stars (Memories)
(Promoted by the Zvi Kessel Literature Fund, Mexico (1954).
97-98) Old Cat - Strong and Weak (Raman)
(99) Fua Rakowsky Memoirs of a Jewish revolutionary
(100) Mark Turkov, the last of a great generation
(101) I. Hirschhoit - Jewish oil magnets
(Promoted by the Mordechai Stoliar Literature Fund, at the Yiddish newspaper), Buenos Aires, 1955)
(102) Moshe Zonshein - Jewish Warsaw
103) f. Mintz (Alexander) - The story of a false illusion
J. Y. Trunk - The world is full of miracles (novel)
107-106-105) - Michael Barwich Arish papers
108-109) Mordechai Strigler - Poor with the Wind (Raman)
111-110) Dr. A. Mokoduni - Warsaw and Lodge.
(112) Baruch Hager - Kingdom of Hasidism
(113) b. Schefner - Novolipie 7 (memoirs)
(114) Pinchas Steinwax - Jews to remember
115) Q. Zetnik - The House of the Dolls
(116) Max Weinreich on both sides Flute (about Uri Kovner)
(117) Eliezer Wiesel - and the world was silent

Not trying to exaggerate the value of the described Shuishpei teachers, who were known as great stage artists. He talks about the dead actors of the Bay Liken Theater with the same love for human and social love, that the border between art and shame, between theater schools and unschooling is blurred and a terrible epic appears, which has no analogy in the history of groups, tribes and nations exterminated - the slaughter and gassing of the Jewish actors of an entire country, from the country of Poland.

Ninety-three main names. Ninety-three different worlds, casts and characters that made up the mosaic of Jewish theater in Poland with their music conductors, decorators, directors, suppliants and among them the famous Arnoldi type, who reminds so strongly in Shalom Elichm's insidious disease "of the wandering stars", the subtle show writer Jonas Turkow described with care but Many lovely bullet points, among biographical details where not where a penny

dzl feature of an attribute or character; Between an episode, a description of the environment or a description of the relationship of one to the other, Shir emerges not an encyclopedia, written by one person, not alphabetically arranged, about the components of the powerful branch of art in Jewish Poland - theater. It is perhaps the first encyclopedia in the world, whose author knew all the men described, most of whom were his colleagues and whom he saw perish with his own eyes.

...and when I think that of all my 187 theater colleagues who were in the Wari Sheven ghetto, only me and my wife Diana Blumenfeld are left alive, I get a shiver down my spine. And I feel ashamed that fate chose us to be the chosen ones.

If I wanted to find your graves, dear friends. Would I go to them and enter

Shout: Forgive me, what I לעב..!"

How can one expect from a survivor, who went through all the seven stages of hell by himself in a mere coincidence or instinctively withdraws from all kinds of actions and exiles until he was saved by the underground fighting organization when the ghetto in Warsaw was already burning; How can one expect from the author, what we learn from him, that in the morning he still worked in Shap" with his fellow actors and after dinner he already saw them lead to where no one came back from - how can one expect objective tongues, during each chapter where an individual or a couple is described as suffering with unlimited faith, love and an infinite longing for the past And what about generations? Is it good that at least one person like Jonas Turkov survived, who had the ability to concentrate his memory in order to bring out the miniature portraits of the 19th century?

artists, painters and personalities such as Dr. Vygodsky and Dr. Leib Landoy - two ardent followers and workers of the Jewish theater. Through the 90 chapters are hundreds of names of people who built or had a relationship with the Jewish theater and among them the deceased Jewish actors and artists in the Warsaw ghetto. There are portraits in the work of Jonas Turkov, who are real heroes for a novel, such as the guy Voitsa, who became a Jewish actor named Shlomo Weingold, the pharmacist Boris Turgel, etc. No less touching are the descriptions of the young Jewish boys, both assimilated and from pious householders, who, with a strange stubbornness and determination, left an impression on them. positions of generations and threw themselves into the arms of the Yiddish theater, where they expected a more interesting, more uplifting and more creative life, and what an idealism and dedication to the path that they took as actors, actors and actresses!

Pioneering way and therefore pioneering achievements. True, not all have achieved artistic perfection and many who have achieved it have actually stuck to better artistic Jewish theater and have not once and not a single one of them allowed themselves to be on the path of easy resistance. Together, however, there was a powerful army of cultural and artistic builders, who added color and creative content to the large, multifaceted Jewish kibbutz of Poland, being at the same time the only connecting link between settlements in the world. Many of us first met here in Argentina with the actors Isaac Samberg, David Zei Derman and Hannah Lerner, Regina Zucker and Carl Zimbalist, about whom Jonas Turkov writes. For actors there are no distances and they fly like the swallows from north to south and from east to west. It's just a great pity that the Hitler war caught them all while they were at home and not visiting abroad, perhaps more would have been saved. And perhaps the instinct made them without the Polish Jewry they no longer have anything to do in the world, and that is why many did not want place and have remarkably said that to be moved by optimism, which is why they called it "Yiva" (Y?. W. A. Hot Bay Date: Jews want this way"), waiting for the day of salvation. This optimism helped to live through the difficult and terrible days of the ghetto. But the highest expression of Jewish confidence and optimism were undoubtedly the theater performances and concerts, which were arranged in the ghetto and which made the difficult and stressful life in the ghetto a little easier. At these performances, the author revealed talents among the actors who devoted their whole lives to cheap theater and first showed themselves in the ghetto as powerful and talented good actors who could prove themselves in the best classical performances. A heavy sadness and anguish leaves each chapter that is finished reading, because at the end of each chapter, where it was talked about one, two or More actors or other artists, the epilogue "killed or gassed" comes later. But the most difficult impression is left by the last chapter "My sister Rachel", where the author talks to his sister Rachel Turkov, who was also an actress and that is why she entered the book. She died together with the other sister Sarahle, and this does not give the author any rest. Of the Turkov family that survived.

At the end of the second volume is There is a register, which includes about 800 names of active years, writers, poets and several other artists, not always known to everyone. This shows that the author made up a lot of details and names that he had drawn or remembered and, apart from the monuments that he placed on the graves of the lost stars, he also brought a lot of useful historical material, which will serve as first-class material for the historian who will write about Jewish theater on the eve of the Second World War and its tragic demise.

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